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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents a collection of experiences and insights about building inclusive school communities in which all members, adults and children, learn and grow together. The monograph addresses the challenging and hopeful venture of welcoming all children into their neighborhood schools, regardless of their abilities and interests. The more than 60 brief anecdotes reflect how children of today are being afforded opportunities to accept, value, and appreciate diversity and to see similarities in all people. The experiences describe successful instances in the inclusion process and provide examples of effective educational practices. (JDD)

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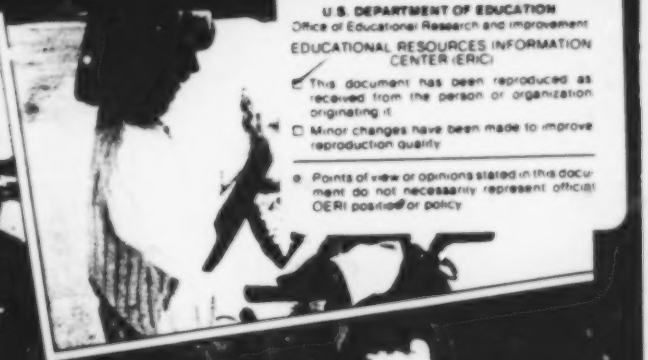

LEARNING TOGETHER...

Stories and Strategies

EC 302 002

The Minnesota Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (MASH)

Institute on Community Integration

Minnesota Department of Education

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Learning Together...
Stories and Strategies

Edited by

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Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis

1989

LEARNING TOGETHER

The front cover depicts school age children from around Minnesota learning together. The cover is also available in a vibrant 17x22 full color poster with the following caption: Learning Together. . .Integrated Schools Today. . .Inclusive Communities Tomorrow. Development of the poster was jointly sponsored by the Minnesota Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (MNASH), the Institute on Community Integration, and the Minnesota Department of Education. Special thanks are extended to the members of the MNASH Integration Team for coordinating the development of the poster and assisting in the collection of stories for this monograph. The poster is available from the Institute on Community Integration Publications office at the price of one for $5.00 or five for $20.00. Make checks payable to the University of Minnesota.

Write:

Learning Together Poster
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Preface

Learning Together . . . Stories and Strategies is a collection of experiences and insights about building inclusive school communities in which all members, adults and children, learn and grow together. In sharing their stories and strategies, the contributors to this monograph address one of the greatest challenges and most hopeful ventures facing today's public schools. . .welcoming all children, regardless of their abilities and interests into the schools they would attend if they did not happen to have a label and into the same classes and other learning environments as classmates without labels.

Some folks wonder and worry. . . *does it really make a difference to have all children included?. . . aren't there some kids who cannot benefit and others who by their mere presence infringe on the learning of classmates?. . . it's probably nice for the kids with labels but does it really matter for the others?. . . by having all children grow up and learn together, are we really creating a generation of children, tomorrow's adults, with different insights and values?. . . is it worth the enormous amount of effort that will be necessary to change our current beliefs and models of "best educational practice"?*

Read these stories. Share them with your family. Share them with your friends. Share them with your children. You decide. Think about the impact that individual children, historically excluded from their school communities, have made on their classmates and teachers. Think about the homecoming for the families. By including all children, all the families are welcomed into the school community as well. Think about how many kids of today are being afforded opportunities that most adults of today were deprived of in their childhood and youth. . . opportunities to accept, value, and appreciate diversity and to see similarities in all people. Think about today's children of inclusive school communities being the leaders and informed decision-makers of tomorrow.

Not many years ago, there were no stories to be told like those in this collection. How far we have come. How proud we should be as a society at the progress we have made. How thankful that there are always people creating the vision and daring to dream of a more accepting, inclusive, and enriched community. The more we share our stories and strategies, the more inclusion of all children will not seem like such a scary venture and most importantly, the more people will learn that inclusion benefits all members of the community.

Our appreciation is extended to the people who took the time to share their stories and strategies for successful inclusion. Learn from their experiences. Think about what it all means and how you can work to welcome and include all folks into your community. Read and enjoy!

Expecting and Demonstrating Attention Skills in Day Care

Kathleen Corrigan

"C", a friendly little four year old boy, was unable to answer direct questions such as,"How old are you?" and "What's your name?" He was enrolled in a day care program which included a couple of other children. The day care mother expected and showed him how to pay attention to her as well as other children. This has resulted in "C" being able to stay with tasks longer and answer more questions in conversations.

"J" is Communicating Now

Kathleen Corrigan

"J", a little three year old girl with delays in all areas, would not communicate with or look at others. She entered a regular preschool and developed a friendship with another girl. They followed each other around, played games involving imitation of each other's gestures, and laughed a lot. "J" is definitely communicating now!

Kathleen Corrigan is the mother of two preschoolers and a part time consultant with Project Dakota Outreach in Dakota County, Minnesota. Project Dakota Outreach is a federally funded training technical assistance project that promotes quality early intervention services for families. Emphasis is placed on serving children and families within the child's naturally occurring play environment.

Jason Does it Himself

Lynn Maier

Jason, at 31 months of age, left the special education preschool behind and joined a busy group of 20 three year olds in a community preschool near his home. Within a few weeks he surprised everyone with his sudden desire to "do it myself." Suddenly he was setting the agenda for his IEP - getting off his jacket, hanging it up, and toilet training.

Jason and his classmates learning together in preschool.

In partnership with Jason's mother, Lynn Maier helped Jason get into and enjoy nursery school, community swimming lessons, park and recreation programs, and regular kindergarten and first grade.

Fear of the Unknown

Julie Tvete

"K", a little girl with Down Syndrome, was integrated into a regular nursery school program and the staff members there were nervous about the unknown. They requested that a special education staff person be there to assist full time. After two weeks the teacher realized that things were going fine and suggested that one day a week of special education assistance would be enough. The special education staff person functioned as an assistant to the entire classroom and activities that were difficult for "K" or that required extra assistance were scheduled on that day each week.

Julie Tvete worked with children with disabilities as an occupational therapist for 12 years. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in occupational therapy from St. Catherine's College, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1977. She currently works part time for the Minneapolis Public Schools in their birth-2 special education program and as a part time consultant for Project Dakota, an outreach project in Dakota County, Minnesota.

Parents React Positively to Interaction

Diane Meidl

"The benefits are deep and far-reaching." This is a quote from the parent of a child with special needs who attends a community preschool program. I had the pleasure of talking with several parents about school and community integration. Their children have developmental disabilities including physical and health concerns such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida and seizures. The children attend community preschools near their homes in Dakota County, south of the Twin Cities, 2-3 days a week and attend special education programs on the other days. The parents see the future education of their children taking place in full-time integrated settings with support from special educators as needed.

The reasons stated by the parents for placing their children in integrated preschool settings include:

- To interact with peers without disabilities.
- To develop socialization skills.
- Exposure to peers without disabilities as role models for speech and movement
- To learn skills in the settings where they will be needed and used.

The parents also expressed some natural concerns such as:

- Will my child be accepted by other children?
- Will my child fall behind if there are too many children and not enough teachers?
- Will the teachers be able to meet my child's special needs?
- Will my child be accepted by the parents of other children?

One of the parents commented that at home and in special education programs her children were "protected, supported, and did fairly well". It wasn't until the children were placed in the community preschool that she gained the awareness of more functional needs of her children (e.g., interacting with peers without disabilities).

When questioned about the benefits of placement in a community preschool setting for their children the parents responded in the following ways:

- "The children learn that my son can't do everything, but see what he can do more readily than what he can't do."
- "Peers have higher expectations than the adults do."
- "Peers provide a challenge and he is motivated to keep up."
- "It gives him the opportunity to be the best he can be."
- "Learning to roughhouse"
- "Exposure to real life situations."
- "Happier."
- "More attentive."
- "Growth in ability to interact with peers."
- "Learning skills in settings where they will be needed."
- "Increased vocabulary."
- "Speaking more clearly."
- "Personal confidence."
- "An emphasis is placed on children's strengths."

The parents benefit from this experience as well. They find comfort in knowing that this placement is available. They are rewarded by the good feelings that come from seeing that their children can function and make a contribution in integrated settings, and from seeing their children accepted by peers, peer's parents, and the teachers.

The parents played an integral role in helping to set up and maintain their children's experiences in community preschools and other community activities. Together with special educators and the community preschool teachers, the parents set goals for their children based on their children's needs, support requirements, and capacity to contribute in the setting. It was the general consensus among parents that discussing the children's strengths and providing opportunities to utilize those strengths were extremely important considerations when setting goals and objectives. The exchange of information about their children with the teachers was ongoing. It involved helping teachers understand their children better and solving problems if they arose.

One parent talked about how she always sought integrated settings. She involved her child in home daycare, the church nursery, and mother/child groups which were the most beneficial to her. She stated that "making a point of it early on is healthier than any other way." This community involvement is also important to help get over the fear of rejection from others. She said that "people sense our confidence in the situation and that makes all the difference."

During challenging situations some of the parents felt that the special education staff were most helpful. The special education teachers offered support and encouragement and ongoing communication with staff in the community preschool setting. One parent stated, "they give wonderful, positive feedback that encourages you to go ahead", and "they help to keep expectations realistic". Another support system that parents viewed as helpful was parent support groups. The benefits include: encouragement for parents facing particular challenges of integration, an opportunity to share methods and face problems that have been encountered, and encouragement of realistic thinking about the future.

During our conversations, I couldn't help but feel the parents' sense of pride in the commitment they have made to meeting their children's needs in integrated school and community settings. They have demonstrated creativity and hard work to obtain the best education possible for their children.

Through the mutual support, commitment and combined efforts of parents and educators, children who have challenging needs can experience greater success in integrated school and community settings. They can make

friends naturally and all children can grow up side-by-side and learn to accept human differences.

Reprinted with permission from *Reflections. . . Movement Toward Community*, a collection of articles published by the Institute for Disabilities Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Diane Meidl is currently working on her Master of Education degree in Educational Psychology at the University of Minnesota. She has a degree in communication disorders and worked as a speech clinician in the public schools for five years. She has two years of experience teaching children with autism and hopes to return to that area when she graduates.

Joann Truly Likes Jamie

Terry Cikanek

One day I got a letter from Joann, a classmate of my son Jamie. In the letter, Joann said that she really liked Jamie, that they had a lot of fun in school together, and that she would like to come over and spend time with him this summer.

After receiving Joann's letter I immediately contacted her. I invited her to come to our house anytime to visit Jamie. She came over that day and ever since she comes four out of 5 days a week. She comes about 10:00 - 11:45 a.m. (only because it's the only time Jamie is home during the week. He has park and recreation in the afternoon). At 10:00, Jamie goes into his prone stander. Most often Jamie has behavior problems at this time because it is not his most favorite thing to do. When Joann is here there are no behavior problems. She watches television with him, plays games, reads, etc. He loves it. After he is done with prone standing Jamie has free time. They most often go outside either for a walk or on his three wheel bike. One day Joann rode her bike around trying to motivate Jamie to peddle his bike. One day Jamie invited her for lunch. They had a pizza and ice cream party. Not too long ago Jamie and Joann went out together in the community for the first time. They went to the local Dairy Queen for an ice cream treat. She was very comfortable being in public with him. The most exciting thing that has happened is Joann has invited Jamie to her house for lunch someday. That's the first time that's ever happened. Now talk about success!!!!

The neatest thing is that Joann continues to come and it's her own idea. I believe Joann truly likes Jamie.

Terry Cikanek is married and the full time mother of Kim, Kori, and Jamie (and part time house keeper). Terry is very involved in advocating for the rights of children with disabilities.

"Mom, I Really Like Heidi"

Jana Magnusson

My daughter had been attending a nursery school class for several weeks. Each morning she would be greeted by her classmates with much excitement and always a big hug from one little boy.

One day as class was ending the boy's mother was gathering his belongings, when he pulled her away to point out my daughter. "That's Heidi," he said, to which his mother replied, "Yes," glancing over to see which child he was pointing at. "Mom, I really like Heidi," he said. As my heart was leaping for joy at my daughter's new found friendship, the other mother and I exchanged glances and smiles and then bundled our kids out the door.

Jana Magnusson and her husband John are the parents of two children, Heidi and Laura. Jana works part time with Project Dakota Outreach.

Ryan Makes a Friend

Linda Kjerland

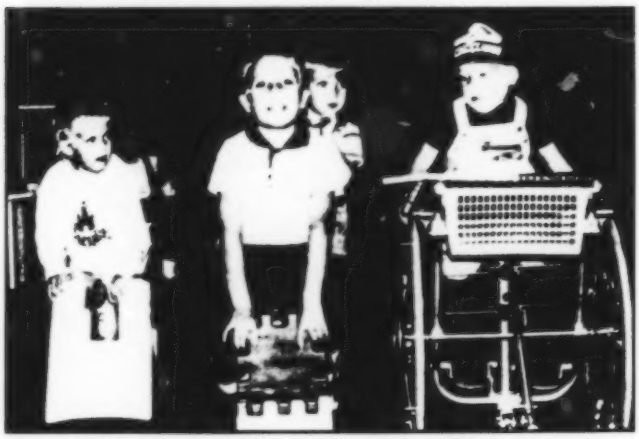
Ryan, who has spina bifida, joined a toddler play group at the local Early Childhood Family Education program. By the second one-hour session he had made a best friend; the two delightfully began crawl chases with each other, oblivious to the other children. Motivated by his friend, Ryan tackled obstacles he'd never done before.

Linda Kjerland, Director of Project Dakota Outreach, assists early intervention programs in their development of integrated family centered services.

Matt and his Friends Ride Motorcycles

Shirley Kramer

Matt rolled into preschool with his new wheelabout, finally upright and at eye level with his four year old playmates. "What is it?" they asked about his new vehicle. "A motorcycle," he replied. Wisely, the teacher postponed the morning schedule as other children rushed for trikes, overturned chairs, and other toys to join Matt in a pretend motorcycle ride.



Matt and his friends riding their "motorcycles".

Shirley and Paul Kramer work hard to keep up with life with three boys whose regular and special lives are a source of pleasure and learning for lots of people beyond their family circle.

Hey, I Can Do That

Gale Halvorson

Eight-month-old Mark, who has Down syndrome, watched but did not participate in his mother's or early intervention teacher's imitation games. When he and another six-month-old were placed side by side in high chairs, his peer reached over, lifted up his wrist, and pounded it on his tray for him. After a chuckle, he began to pound the tray himself. That same responsiveness to his own age mates was clearly evident later as a toddler in the local early childhood family education program.

Mark and his friend playing together.

Gale Halvorson and her family have helped Mark into the mainstream of his South St. Paul, Minnesota community via neighborhood playmates, early childhood family education, and now a community preschool.

Beth Plays Duck, Duck, Grey Duck

Jean Mendenhall

Child Care Center staff members were nervous about the inclusion of Beth, a preschooler with myelomeningocele. They wondered what to do if the other children asked her embarrassing questions about why she couldn't walk. On the first day, during "Duck, Duck, Grey Duck," a boy chose Beth and quickly dropped to hands and knees so he and Beth could chase around the circle on equal terms.

Jean Mendenhall travels the country and inspires programs in integrated and family centered services. This scenario came from a visit to a rural Minnesota program.

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Each Child is Unique

LuAnn Jelinek

As I watched my child, Becky, sit on the floor at preschool it occurred to me that even though over the last four years she has been given a variety of labels (mild cerebral palsy, hyperactive, speech deficiency), she really isn't handicapped. As she was wiggling in her place, I could count four typical kids doing the same thing. As she was trying to talk I saw two other children simply stop and wait because they knew it might take Becky a little longer to communicate. During finger play it was nice to see that all of the children, not just Becky had difficulty. Becky is not the only child who is "different" — all children are different. Each child is unique. Isn't that wonderful?!

"This is Great, Isn't it Katie?"

LuAnn Jelinek

On the car ride to the park, my five year old Becky, my eight year old Katie, and their friend Jake were sitting in the back seat. Jake and Becky were jabbering away about the fun they'd have when we got to the park. Jake turned to Katie and said, "This is great, isn't it Katie? We're going to have fun!" He knew she couldn't answer, but as he looked in her eyes he also knew that she listened and was as excited as the rest. Katie smiled and cooed. Jake said "Katie says she's happy" and she was!

Katie is the Boss

LuAnn Jelinek

It was a hot, sunny day and my eight year old Katie was in bed. It had been about 30 days since she had surgery (her 48th hospitalization). I thought about how isolated she was from the rest of the world and how I wished she had enough strength to get up and go out more. I tried to have Katie sit up for a half hour, but she really just wanted to sleep.

Later that day, Katie's five year old sister had two neighbor children, Ashley who is four and Tia who is nine, over to play. They got out the Burger King play dough set and began to play. I got Katie up and put her at the table and said, "let's see how long Katie will sit up and play." The kids encouraged her and in five minutes she was smiling. During their play, the kids decided that they were the play dough workers and Katie was the boss. Katie enjoyed being the boss and sat up and played with the children for an entire hour!

LuAnn Jelinek and her husband Doug have two children, Katie and Becky. They describe their family as a "waivered service success story" because they get all the help they need to care for their children at home. LuAnn is a parent case manager through South Suburban ARC and an associate consultant for Project Dakota Outreach.

Brian and Stephanie are Friends, but not Best Friends

Jo Montie

Brian and Stephanie are preschoolers who participate in an integrated preschool experience. Stephanie does not have special education needs. Brian's modes of communication include vocalizations/sounds, signs, facial expressions, and body language. Like any preschooler, Brian is really into exploring his world through play. While he is actively engaged in play, he often times makes loud sounds over his pleasure and excitement. Sometimes, he also makes loud sounds just to see what others will do.

To Stephanie and other peers, Brian's sounds and some of his other behaviors (for example, knocking over towers that others build) appear to be "annoying." Staff have noted that Stephanie isn't especially "into" being with Brian. However, one day at school, Stephanie had the following conversation with Kris, one of the teachers:

STEPHANIE: "I don't like Brian." (rather matter-of-factly)

KRIS: (continued to listen)

STEPHANIE: "But Brian's my friend." (saying this in a rather puzzled way)

KRIS: "You don't have to be best friends with everyone." (encouraging voice)

STEPHANIE: "Yes, Brian is definitely not my best friend." (emphatically)

We feel terrific that kids are thinking about friendships and relationships and openly sharing feelings. We, as staff, try to provide opportunities for the kids to explore these issues.

With a Little Help from my Friends

Jo Montie

Denise is a cheerful kindergarten student (with moderate mental disabilities). During "reading readiness time" an additional teacher or teaching assistant joins the room to adapt materials or provide different activities for Denise to do. One of Denise's IEP objectives is to print her name on her papers, projects, etc. Tracing over dotted lines is a strategy that helps her. The other day an extra adult was not present to help Denise. The kindergarten teacher shared this story. . .

"I walked over to Denise's table and she and her classmates were busy at work. While Denise's peers were working on their work books, Denise was also doing her work. Several of her peers had, without any teacher cue or request, dotted Denise's name several times on her papers and then each had gotten to work!"

All Kids Learn

Jo Montie

This past year has been the first year that students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities have had their PRIMARY placement be a regular education classroom. Zach is a five-year-old with moderate intellectual delays. His main modes of communicating include pointing, gesturing, some sign approximations, eye contact, and some vocalizing. Zach's kindergarten teacher, an experienced teacher, shared this at the end of the year: "Last spring when we discussed the idea of having Zach as a member of my class in the fall, I was fine with this. I could certainly see the benefits for the typical kids - appreciation and awareness of differences, promotion of caring and sharing, etc. However, although I never expressed it at the time, I really did not see the benefits for Zach. I was really under the impression that kids like Zach (with such cognitive delays) did not change much. He taught me differently. I really saw gains in his skills over the school year. I especially saw growth in the way he communicated and played."

Zach and his friend working on an art project together in kindergarten.

Just Say No to Segregation!

Jo Montie

After only a few weeks of being a member of his (regular education) kindergarten class, Zach communicated DEFINITE preferences for where and with whom he wanted to be for learning and playing at school. This example illustrates Zach's feelings about being separated: When it was time for Zach to go to the resource room during kindergarten reading time, Zach dashed away from the special education teacher and took refuge under one of the tables! Although Zach's message was already quite clear, he expanded upon this by shaking his head and using a sign approximation of "no!!"

"You Really Like Me, Don't You Donald?"

Jo Montie

Donald is a delightful three year old boy who is a member of a local nursery school class (with special education support). Donald has multiple disabilities including severe mental and physical limitations, visual impairments, and a seizure disorder. Donald's main ways of communicating include smiling, vocalizing, facial expressions, and body movements. One of our team goals is to increase his intentional communication. One teaching strategy is to interpret his actions, vocalizations, and facial expressions, as intending to communicate a message.

During snack time one day, a new girl, Jolene, was sitting at one side of Donald. Jolene was very curious about Donald's gastrointestinal tube. As Donald was helping to show Jolene his tube, a couple of times he reached out and grabbed at her (perhaps accidentally, perhaps on purpose). I interpreted this to Jolene as "Donald likes your shirt" or "Donald's saying hi to you." A little while later Donald kicked Jolene under the table (again perhaps accidentally, perhaps on purpose). I was about to interpret Donald's kick as communicative when Jolene did it first!! She said, "Donald kicked me. Donald, you really like me don't you?"

Donald's inclusion in nursery school has been very successful. The nursery school staff really enjoy him and have observed how almost all the kids really like being his friend. Donald appears to be one of the most popular three year olds! Having observed Donald's and others' successful inclusion, I think it is important for all kids (those with identified disabilities and those without) to be together right from the start.

Jo Montie works with the Chisago Lakes School District and Chisago-Pine Education District in Chisago City, Minnesota. Jo is committed to building inclusive school communities, "where each belongs."

Tomas Plays House with his Friends

Rebecca Rice Tetlie

During choice time in kindergarten, many children like to play house with Tomas. One day, Tomas was in his wheelchair playing "tea time" with some other children. Elizabeth put food, a cup, and a saucer on his tray. She pretended to pour "tea" into the cup and then she brought the cup to Tomas' mouth. Robin came and shared a little toy with Tomas by putting it in his hand. Tomas grinned from ear to ear.

Another day, Angela "cooked an apple" for Tomas' breakfast and offered it to him. Nicole offered Tomas "chocolate." Tomas is a child who typically has a very difficult time keeping his head upright, but during this play time, he looked at the other children and kept his head up for more than fifteen minutes.

Tony and his Friends Play Together in Gym Class

Rebecca Rice Tetlie

Tony loves playing games with his friends in gym class. One day during a music and movement record, Kevin and Pirwee took the arms of Tony's wheelchair and walked, hopped, skated, tiptoed, and galloped with him to the music. During the "run" part of the music, they took off running as fast as they could, separately from Tony. However, as soon as running was finished, they darted back to Tony for more walking, hopping, skating, tiptoeing, and galloping together. They seemed to know what Tony liked, what he could handle, and what was safe.

Rebecca Tetlie is a Speech and Language Clinician for St. Paul Schools with a special interest in integration for all kids and providing service in integrated settings.

Caring and Sharing: Bryan in First Grade

Ann Meyer

Bryan is integrated into a first grade classroom for physical education, music, lunch, recess, story time, and other activities throughout the day. These are all activities in which he can be a direct participant at his own level. Therefore, Bryan's motivation and interest in them has increased. His inclusion in lunch and physical education have been the two most successful activities. I think that this is true because they do not require Bryan to sit at a desk or to be confined to a small area. Instead they allow him to be in a larger, more open environment where he seems more comfortable.

Prior to Bryan's involvement in the first grade class, I collaborated with the regular classroom teacher. I shared information with her to increase her understanding of Bryan and helped her to identify ways of passing along the information to his classmates. After he had been involved in the first grade class for about three weeks, I went in and talked to the students myself in order to give them a good picture of what Bryan is all about and to give them a chance to ask questions. I used a variety of creative play activities to help the typical students gain a better understanding of students with disabilities. I've also started a "Caring and Sharing" program. I premised this by telling the students I was on the "Caring and Sharing" patrol squad and once every two weeks I would bring up my treasure box and two students would be selected (of course, Bryan was in the running for this honor also) to pick out a treasure. This gave me a consistent opportunity to work with his classmates throughout the year.

One of the biggest factors in Bryan's success is his classmates. They are wonderful role models for him and sometimes have more success in getting him to behave appropriately than adults do. One example of this was the time when Bryan was standing in the lunch line but not moving forward. One of the other students said, "Bryan get going, I'm hungry." Bryan then moved forward. I'm sure that the other student was much more effective in this situation than I would have been.

Another important factor in his success is the excellent regular education staff. They have been extremely supportive of his integration. They actively work with him and treat him as much as possible like the other students. I feel that it is very important to inservice the staff and provide them with the support they need. I also feel that it is important for special educators to get as involved as possible with the typical students, so that they can be viewed as people who teach all students in partnership with regular educators.

If I don't invite, you can't accept.
If you can't accept, you won't invite.
If you don't invite, I can't accept.
If there are not invitations, there is no development.
Be open to invite and invitations!

From: Purkey, W. & Novak, J. (1984). *Inviting school success.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Ann Meyer grew up with a brother with mental handicaps and has worked with people with disabilities her entire life. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh and is currently working on her masters degree.

Could I Relax Tony's Muscles?

Barb Schweiger

Lisa, a kindergarten student, had been watching the special education teacher do range of motion exercises with Tony during sharing time and listening time in their class. One day she asked, "Could I relax Tony's muscles?" She then gently initiated some of the relaxation movements she'd seen the teacher do with Tony.

Barb Schweiger is the mother of three children and a special education teacher at Homecroft Elementary School in St. Paul, Minnesota where she assists five students with disabilities to be members of regular classes. Barb is a high energy person whose favorite class to teach is "Movement and Music" which gives her the opportunity to promote wellness and fitness for each child at his or her own level.

Festival of Trees

Laura Mickel

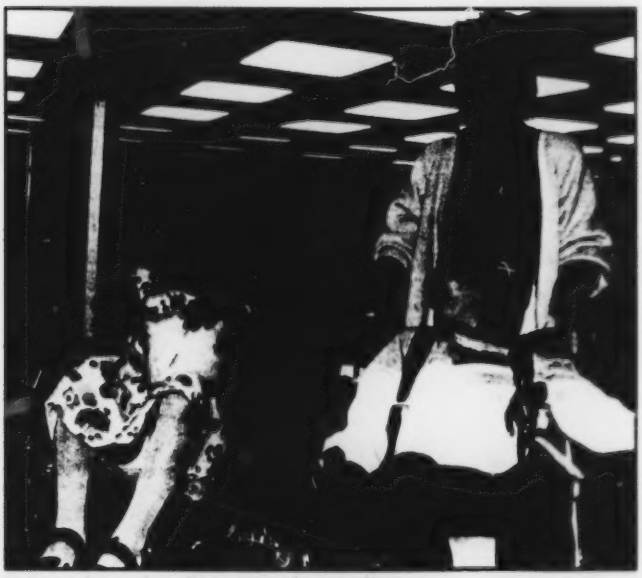
The "Festival of Trees" is an annual fund-raising event in Rochester, Minnesota. Many groups and organizations decorate the Christmas trees that are displayed at the festival. At our school the students receiving special education decorated a tree in collaboration with all six third and fourth grade classes. The spirit of the tree's theme "Hands and Hearts Together" was seen throughout the project as typical students participated by making their own ornaments as well as using hand-over-hand assistance to help their peers with disabilities make their ornaments for the tree.

Laura Mickel taught children with moderate disabilities this past year at Elton Hills Elementary in Rochester, Minnesota. She will be working at Gage Elementary this year.

Eric's Friend does his Job

Becky Ward

Eric, a student in Becky Ward's class for students with developmental disabilities, attends homeroom with his peers without handicaps. He has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair with a Touch Talker electronic communication aid attached. We wanted to show Eric's classmates how he does his job of collecting attendance slips each day. Eric's homeroom teacher, Bruce Wizik came up with the idea of having a drawing to determine who would learn about Eric's job first hand. Sarah Demarais won and spent the next week watching Eric and finally taking over to do the job herself, with Eric watching.



Eric and Sarah collect attendance slips.

Sarah reported learning such things as: driving an electric wheelchair with only minimal crashes, being asked if she was retarded and dealing with her feelings on that, getting the opportunity to see what it feels like to use a wheelchair, and all the extra attention one often receives when he or she has a disability.

For Eric the real fun was watching Sarah throughout the entire process. He is basically nonverbal, but was able to communicate to us each day to ask when Sara was coming in and motioned to us that he wanted something about the experience put in his Touch Talker. His face lit up when she would arrive and he gladly gave up his chair to ride beside her in a stroller to watch. Above the sounds of the school you could hear Eric giggle each time Sarah hit a wall. It definitely started a deep friendship between these two third graders.

Prior to starting this project, we inserviced Eric's homeroom class about disabilities and talked a lot about Eric and his challenges. The speech clinician spent a great deal of time inservicing them on Eric's communication needs along with how to help him use his Touch Talker to communicate throughout the day.

This project really had an impact on Eric's class. After that week, it seems like all of them took a special interest in being with Eric, helping him, and becoming his friend. Eric was thrilled. Sarah developed a whole new outlook on Eric and I think her self concept jumped up a few notches too.

We, Eric's teachers, were able to watch friendships unfold for the rest of the year and affirm to us that this concept called integration does work in ways that might not even be measurable to researchers - for how does one document smiles, giggles, and feelings of love?

Becky Ward has been a special education teacher for the past 14 years. She received her training from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. For the past six years, she has put a lot of time and energy into integrating students with disabilities into the mainstream.

A Favorite Story

Judy Neiss

One of my favorite stories happened this summer when Nikolas and I went to a neighborhood parade. As we were looking for a place to plunk ourselves to watch the parade, Richard -- a first grade classmate of Nik's -- came running up to Nik, threw his arms around him, and said, "Come sit with us!" Nik sat with Richard and his cousin and had a great time. When the clowns came by throwing candy, Richard made sure Nik got his fair share. I sat with Richard's mother, whom I had just met. She told me that Richard talked about Nikolas all the time and that she was happy to finally have the opportunity to meet Nik.

An event like this happens naturally for typical kids all of the time. I know that if Nikolas wasn't integrated into the regular classroom, this event wouldn't have happened for him at all.

Judy Neiss lives in north Minneapolis with her husband John, Nikolas, four daughters, and one other son. Nikolas attended kindergarten and first grade in regular classrooms, and now attends a regular second grade class at Hamilton Elementary School in Minneapolis.

Amar Gill, a Member of First Grade at Countryside School

Nancy Long

Amar Gill, an eight year old boy with Down syndrome, was integrated into a first grade class at his home school, Countryside School in Edina, Minnesota during the 1987-88 school year. He was the first student in this district to be totally integrated. Amar had previously been in a segregated class for students with disabilities. Although the students from the segregated class had been mainstreamed for some activities, that consisted of a student and an aide entering the regular classes for short periods of time as visitors and then returning to the special education classroom.

Amar and his classmates listen intently to a social studies lesson.

Amar's first grade teacher, Mrs. Nona Anderson, had no special education training but was committed to making his year in her class a successful one. She was extremely flexible and willing to look for a solution to any problem. I, Mrs. Nancy Long, the aide assigned to assist Amar, had worked for eight years as an aide in a self-contained class for students with disabilities. Our assignment, to help Amar be a member of the regular class, was a difficult one because we were covering uncharted ground and were in the limelight district-wide. Despite this, he has been integrated for two years and his inclusion is considered to be very successful.

At the beginning of the first year, we did a lot of team planning with the help of Linda Kjerland, Project Director of Project Dakota Outreach. The team members consisted of Amar's parents, staff members who had previously worked with him, and staff members who would be directly involved with his integration. The team discussed motivators, ideas, concerns, and resources that would make his inclusion successful. Monthly team meetings continued throughout the year, offering a time for problem solving and keeping team members current concerning his progress. Throughout the first year, a special education consultant was available to us and ready to lend advice or a hand at a moment's notice. The Assistant Director of Special Education and the school principal offered constant support and encouragement also. Having a strong team and a lot of support were important elements of our success.

Another important element of our success was a classroom teacher who was truly concerned and dedicated to making things happen. She and I had excellent rapport, which reduced tension in the classroom and carried over to Amar's classmates attitudes toward him. It was a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

Amar and his classmates, five at a time, met weekly with a special education staff member to discuss and role play difficult situations. This is continuing through his second year and is proving to be very helpful. Through this, Amar and his classmates' social abilities have increased. His classmates have also learned how to understand and better help him.

Amar has been fortunate to have enthusiastic physical education, art, and music teachers, all of whom are concerned with his success. His art teacher worked one-to-one with him weekly. His music teacher took extra time helping him participate in class activities. His physical education teacher was relentless in trying different approaches to help him feel successful and a part of the group.

Exceptional parental support made relationships among staff and with parents less stressful. Total trust was displayed to personnel and helpful suggestions were offered to solve problems.

Amar and his friends choosing library books together.

Continued on page 11

Amar and friends show off their track and field awards.

In order to make a smooth transition into second grade, I continued to work with Amar. This proved to be very important. He needed the security and trust that had developed between us to face a new teacher and new classmates. We also made sure that some of this first grade classmates were in his second grade class. Therefore, there were some familiar faces creating a less threatening situation.

The benefits to Amar of being integrated are many. His appropriate behavior has increased, in large part due to modeling by his peers. He has gained skills and knowledge in many areas, particularly social studies, science and English. His self-esteem, vocabulary, and ability to make transitions have all improved. He has been involved in many social activities with his peers including his friend's birthday parties, Cub Scouts, Kids Club (a day care service in our building), and jogging club. He also participated in regular summer school without an aide and a regular summer park program, where he was a member of a soccer team with typical children.

We have faced some challenges and barriers to Amar's inclusion, most of which have resulted from the negative attitudes of other staff members. Although there was some inservicing at the beginning of the school year which included physical education, music, and art, most people have no idea of how to deal with Amar and are afraid to try. As a result, he was not allowed most places without me. Many of the staff not directly involved with him expressed outrage and resentment at having to deal with his inclusion. There was fear too that this would "happen" to them. We were always on the defensive. In addition, there was a lack of understanding by the some of the regular classroom teachers regarding how important and necessary it was to adapt work and behavior demands for Amar. Another challenge we faced was knowing how to help him fit in. There was no outline, guide, or plan to follow. We were breaking new ground at every turn. It was often very frustrating.

Recommendations I would make for future integration include the following:

1) Inservicing and training for all staff involved, particularly regular educators with no special education background.

2) Inservice including: What to expect of the student, how much adaptation is needed and who will be responsible for it, importance of regular educator's participation in all aspects of the school day, importance of adapting the class to the student, training regarding the specific handicap(s) of the student, prior meeting of the student and observation, expectations of parents, dealing with typical students in regard to the student with a disability, preview of past behavior and academic needs and performance of the student.

3) Plan ahead to have team meetings.

4) Be organized ahead - plan available support.

5) Have a supportive special education consultant available in the building.

6) Have a notebook for daily communication between school staff and parents.

7) If possible, deal with only enthusiastic and willing teachers.

8) Teachers should be made aware of planning and conference time required.

9) Possibly establish a support group that includes previous teachers of the student.

10) Possibly compensate teachers for extra meetings and conferences.

11) Establish realistic time frames for expectations.

Nancy Long has been a teacher paraprofessional in special education in the Edina, Minnesota, public schools for ten years. The first eight years were spent in a resource room which served students with mental handicaps and the next two years were spent working in a mainstream classroom implementing a district pilot program for integration. Nancy Long attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She is married and the mother of three grown sons. She previously taught in Montessori programs in Minnesota and Tennessee, has helped coach Special Olympics, has served on a two year district task force concerning the Changing Learner, and is currently President of the Edina Paraprofessional Association.

From the Inside Looking Out

Pushing the door open, I leave the school. It's the end of another day. The playground, once filled with the sound of children is now quiet. The soft crunch of my shoes on the snowy pavement accompanies my thoughts as I make my way to the parking lot. My visible breath moves up and beyond me into the crisp evening air. I take a deep breath and recall the day in my mind, and begin the ritual of reflecting on the events of the few hours just passed. As the many images pass before my mind's eye, a spirit of the day emerges and melds into the combined essence of the past. From this process, I gain insight into the path I wish to take. I reflect on what has passed to aid in guiding the future. In the contributions to follow, this process of reflection to gain insight into the meaning of events, and to determine future direction, is illustrated. Taking the time to reflect gives time to measure, to evaluate, to discover what may be hidden — an idea, an attitude, an opinion, an insight. Once shared with others, these discoveries can support and influence the quality of our present and future relationships in education.

Steven Dahlstrom

My son, Benjamin, is eight and one-half years old and has physical and mental handicaps. For the past six years he has progressed through various areas of special educational services with varying degrees of separation from the rest of the educational world. Most of his schooling has been in settings where he had little or no contact with so-called "normal" children.

Last year in School District 287, he experienced some ventures into the community such as weekly bowling, swimming and field trips. His class had regular activities with a second grade. This year, in addition to these activities, he spends about half his school day in the first grade and is expected to participate to the best of his ability. He is not a mere visitor.

When I first learned that Ben would be joining the class, I was afraid that it was just a patronizing gesture on the part of the teacher and the students. Also, because he cannot do the academic work, I didn't feel there would be any great benefit for him. I was wrong on both accounts.

In the two months Ben has been in the classroom, I have come to think of this experience differently. He has actually picked up some early academic skills like paying attention and using the materials. More importantly, he has increased his social awareness. He knows when people are trying to communicate with him and he knows he has a lot of control over how various group projects will get done.

His interactions with other children have changed. He has always been afraid of his younger brother (with good cause) and totally ignored other children unless they came into his personal space. Anyone entering his space was subject to severe objections from Ben. He is now tolerant of contact with his brother. He observes other children with caution, but there now seems to be some curiosity instead of just fear.

Ben and his classmates listen to their teacher.

Ben's first grade experience is also linked to the larger community. When we meet his classmates in public they are eager to introduce him to their families. It is interesting to see how much more comfortable the kids are than their parents. I realize that Ben is somewhat of a novelty to them but that is not all bad. The kids are very matter-of-fact about his differences and their special attention to him seems to stem from concern rather than curiosity. I feel that both Ben and his first grade classmates have benefited from this experience and the long-term gains will be even greater, not only for them but for the whole community.

Katherine Marfield
November 1988

As a special education teacher, I have recently been inundated with information and literature concerning integration — the subject of the "new age" in education. It is important to me to become familiar with all the varied theories, designs, and implementation strategies recommended so I feel prepared when we together take that plunge into the "regular education" classroom. But more important, I have discovered that I must remain flexible and sensitive to the individuals with whom I am working and be aware of the extent of the resources upon which I can depend. Theories help at first but, in day-to-day classroom life, the "way" the educational experiences develop will depend on the collective contribution of all the people involved: students, parents, "special" educators, and "regular" education teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, and administrators. It is through the combined efforts of everyone that the spirit of the experience unfolds.

Steven Dahlstrom

It's been my greatest pleasure having Ben Marfield as my part-time student in first grade this year. The children view him as I do: a classmate who goes to another teacher for special help for some of the day.

His aide is a warm, sensitive person with much expertise, and the two of them are encouraged to join us in as many activities as they wish.

The children treat him as they do their full time classmates, with kindness and respect.

Whatever positive changes may occur in Ben's life because of our time together, the lives of the rest of us have been enhanced in far greater measure.

Luanne Lescarbeau
First Grade Teacher

Some years ago I saw a Walt Disney cartoon entitled "Ben and Me." It depicted a small field mouse who lived in Benjamin Franklin's breast pocket, negotiating a written pact with Ben about his housing arrangements. He prompted Ben's writing of the pact, at his ear and at his elbow, word for word. I, the viewer, saw it as a fantasy depiction of Ben Franklin struggling over and perfecting the wording of the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. The mouse saw it as the writing of his new contract with his landlord for a mutual life of liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

So it is with Ben Marfield and me in Mrs. Lescarbeau's first grade classroom, Washburn Elementary in Bloomington, Minnesota. We enter the classroom, participate in the classroom and leave the classroom, together, with Ben always in the foreground and me at his ear, or at his elbow, helping, urging, prompting, cajoling and praising.

Ben begins his class time on the floor with the other first graders for 15-20 minutes of sharing time. There are always children in front, behind and on either side of him, everyone at the same eye level. At first he wasn't so sure he approved. Then he began to bear it. Now he looks disappointed when they leave him and return to their desks.

He then spends the next hour at his own desk working on handwriting, math, and reading. Mrs. Lescarbeau treats him exactly like all the other students, and includes him at all the appropriate times. She expects no more or no less of him than he is presently able. He has not yet needed a reminder for leaving his seat without permission, but he has been reprimanded for pulling out his hearing aid and throwing it across the room. She believes in accepting the student where he or she is now — not where he or she is "supposed" to be. When Ben is working at his desk, I become the mouse in our story. I guide, encourage, or push Ben to get working on his daily "preamble."

We are with the class at least two and one-half hours a day. At first, I stayed completely in the background, even sitting behind him instead of sitting beside him. Then I moved to his side to help in manual guidance as well as in verbal guidance. He is accustomed to my presence and is becoming much more aware of the different inflections or levels in my voice. I also stayed in the background as far as the other children were concerned. I wanted Ben to be the reason we were there — front and center. Now I converse with and/or help any child who requests it and I usually coax them to stand in front of me to ask their question. That way the children and Ben get to look at each other.

I feel that Ben's integration into the first grade has been a huge success. He has come from tears about my absence from view, fear of other children close to him, and the total refusal to cooperate with manual guidance. . .to an eagerness to be in the room, very little worry, and acceptance of manual guidance. I give 10% of the credit to my conviction that Ben deserves to be there, 90% of the credit to Mrs. Lescarbeau, the teacher who feels every child has a right to learn and 100% of the credit to the children who think that the only thing that's different about Ben is that he's not in the room all day.

Ben and me, we'll perfect that preamble yet.

Ann Romstad
Special Education Paraprofessional

Ben works on a math lesson.

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From the inside looking out, I look toward the future. I remind myself to be open to the individuality of each experience, of each classroom, of each new educational relationship. The relationships vary according to who is present to initiate and encourage the "flow" between the people involved. Perhaps a totally unique theory for integration will emerge. I remind myself not to change what is growing, merely to fit an initial beginning idea. I must remember that we are a group of people sharing this common experience. We all contribute to its collective spirit. All of our points of view must be considered.

The other students in Ben's room never questioned Ben's eligibility in their classroom. Instead, they ask, "Why isn't Ben in here all day?" and say "Gee, Ben, you do nice work." They struggle to be fair in taking turns when pushing Ben's chair on the way to music or computer class. At times, I hear a question of complete honesty, "Will Ben be able to walk?" They are as curious about Ben as they are about each other. They have developed a friendship with Ben as they have with their other classmates. He is no more special in the end than any other friend.

I keep my eyes open and listen to parents, children, and teachers. I make my contribution to guiding our common way, keeping in mind the mutual benefit we all seek together as we come together, to learn, to harmonize — to bring parts together to make a whole, to integrate.

Steven Dahlstrom

Ben working alongside his classmates.

Steven Dahlstrom is presently a special education teacher with elementary aged children with severe disabilities in Bloomington, Minnesota, with the Hennepin Technical Institute, District 287. He is a Minnesota native, an artist, and author of a beginning reader entitled School Days that encourages accepting attitudes between children concerning issues of differences presented by disabilities. He received his Master of Education degree from the University of Minnesota in 1989.

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Amy, a Member of Second Grade

Laura Kranstover

For the last six weeks of the school year, a pilot integration project took place at a south Minneapolis elementary school, bringing together a student described as having profound disabilities with a second grade classroom. In this school, integrating students with profound disabilities into regular classes had not been done before except during art or music periods.

The classroom which Amy joined was the largest second grade class. One of the benefits of Amy's inclusion in the class was having an extra teacher, creating a team teaching situation. As the classroom teacher taught reading groups and math groups, the special education student teacher worked with Amy in small groups of classmates. The classroom teacher found it particularly helpful to be able to move a student who became disruptive into the smaller group structure. Consistently, when disruptive students joined the small group, they would become less disruptive. As a rule, however, being a part of the smaller groups with Amy was an incentive for the typical students to do well behaviorally and academically.

The second grade teacher said that it had been a very positive experience for the typical students to have Amy as part of their class, and that she would like to see as many students with disabilities as possible integrated into regular classrooms. She said that her students have become more thoughtful than when they first started second grade and were selfish and wanted to know what "they" can get out of life rather than thinking about what they can give to others. She said that the children became less selfish when working with Amy and that it "expanded them socially". She cited one student in particular who had great difficulty academically and was often disruptive. He got along very well with Amy, something noted repeatedly by teachers. His relationship with Amy was one where he knew he could be successful. His teacher felt that this helped him academically by giving him a sense of accomplishment. Along with his new found success, he also became less disruptive.

For Amy, the benefits of her inclusion were many. Among the most significant was the change in Amy's ability to sit up independently. Her goal for quite some time had been to sit up unsupported independently for two minutes. The first day in the regular class, Amy sat up for 45 minutes without slumping. When Amy would slump, she would often independently sit up straight again in order to observe the other children. Amy soon participated in a co-curriculum where, for example, she would work on her goals of sitting up and attending while typical students played board games with her, a right which they won by answering their lesson questions correctly. Amy also worked on her individualized goals while participating with other students in grocery shopping, cooking, reading, art, going to the library, and working on the computer. Amy's special education teacher noted that Amy smiled and vocalized considerably more than she had before being included in the second grade.

For the duration of Amy's six week experience, her presence received a very enthusiastic response from the typical second graders. Amy enjoyed her inclusion also and expressed frustration whenever she was taken out of the second grade classroom and into the special education classroom.

The biggest barrier to her integration were the attitudes of some teachers. The physical education teacher, for example, protested at length and came up with many reasons why Amy could not participate in physical education class. Amy was only allowed to observe and even that was with great misgivings at first.

My recommendations for future integration would be to:

1) Start with regular education teachers who volunteer.

2) Allow time for the regular education teacher to get to know the new student as well as to observe special education staff working with the student.

3) Allow time for the special education staff to get to know the regular curriculum and lesson plans.

4) Allow for one to one special education support at first, if necessary, and fade that support as soon as possible.

5) Make at least a two-month commitment to have the student with disabilities stay in the classroom throughout the day, providing alternative activities during lectures and testing.

6) Have therapists (occupational, physical, or speech therapists) be involved in the regular classroom and make suggestions for the best use of the student's time.

7) Incorporate all necessary equipment (e.g., stander, wheelchair, augmentative communication device) into classroom activities.

8) Answer everyone's questions openly and honestly.

Laura Kranstover currently is a teacher on special assignment for the Minneapolis Public Schools. Laura met Amy in a teaching practicum at Michael J. Dowling School while working on her Master of Arts degree in special education from the University of Minnesota. Laura has been working with the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota since 1985.

A NEW BEGINNING FOR JEFFERY

Can Jeffery Come Out and Play?

Pat Tietz

September 5, 1988 - A new beginning for Jeffery. Tuesday was the first day in first grade in his home school. We had a homecoming party with family and friends after school. What a day! By Friday, the first payoff of integration occurred. The doorbell rang. I answered it to find my neighbor's grandson, Brad, at the door. I was sure that he had come to visit my two older boys, as was usual when he was in the neighborhood. To my delight, he asked to play with Jeffery. Four days of first grade and another first, someone seeking out Jeffery at home to play. My only disappointment was that Jeffery was not home. He was out shopping for school supplies. However, since then, Brad has continued to come over and spend time with Jeffery and his older brothers.

Jeffery is a Member of Swimming Class

Pat Tietz

Jeffery is attending first grade in his home school this year (a successful venture thus far) and in an attempt to keep Jeffery visible in the community with his peers we enrolled him in a community education swimming class.

The kids accepted Jeffery and the aide who helps him and things were progressing nicely. Then one afternoon I received a phone call from another swimmer's mom, wondering if we had lessons on a particular evening. That was music to my ears - she could have called any number of other parents but she called us. Jeffery was, in fact, a member of the class and accepted. This Spring when Jeffery was at Southtown mall, two little girls said, "Mom, there's Jeffery, he was in our swimming class." They came over and chatted for a few minutes and then continued their shopping. Way to go Jeffery!

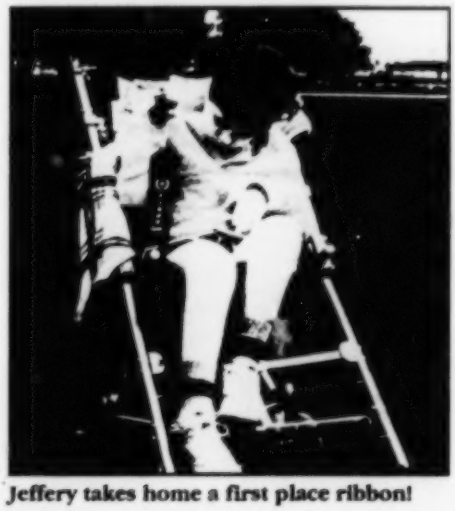
Track and Field Day

Pat Tietz

Jeffery is ready to run the race!

Jeffery participated in track and field day with help from 6th graders and an aide. He was in the 50 yard dash, softball throw, and tug of war. It was great to see every child work so hard to do his or her best. They all cheered for and encouraged each other through every event.

An arrow went through my heart when two little girls came up and told me they hoped Jeffery would win a first place ribbon. He did too! A second arrow hit the mark when Jeffery's friend, Paul, came over to me and said, "I would run the race for Jeffery if they would let me. I'm the fastest runner, you know." I know he was the front runner in my book that day.



Jeffery takes home a first place ribbon!

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The Party is Over, But it's Only Just Begun

Pat Tietz

Thursday, February 2, 1989. Another Ground Hog day for most, but in our home we celebrate Jeffery's birthday. This year he was 8 years old. This birthday was more special than previous years because Jeffery had his first birthday party at "McDonald's" with his new friends from first grade. Before that he shared the day first with all his classmates by bringing in the usual and customary birthday "treats:" cupcakes all in a row spelling out "Happy Birthday JEFFERY!"

Thursday went well and then nervous apprehension on mom's part, wondering if the eight first grade friends really liked Jeffery enough to want to share in a party on Saturday; only four had R.S.V.P.'d. But sure enough, by Friday all eight parents had called and yes, the kids were excited to come.

At 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, the kids arrived one by one and by 9:45 we were in three cars and on our way to partytime at McDonald's. McDonald's was ready for us and the kids were more than ready for them. The party began.

The usual games were started. Stacking Big Mac boxes, counting aloud to see who would make the tallest tower. In seven minutes or so we were onto the next game. Hot Potato, with McDonaldland cookies as the potato. The kids were doing great! One little friend that didn't want to play before because he was a "loser" (his words) was in the thick of it and doing a fine job. And what do you know? He won the game and the cookies, but my heart melted as he said "I'm giving these to Jeffery". Spoken like a true friend. Thank you Dustin.

The next game was ring toss and all the kids were squealing hoping they could win, and Jeffery was really excelling at this game. His friends cheered him on in hopes that every ring would find its mark. It was a great feeling to stand and watch my son participate in the game and have his friends be so excited for him. The kids squealed with delight to see Jeffery hit the mark and actually play the game just like they did.

The time whizzed by and before you knew it we were doing reruns on the games while we waited for the food. Then the children found their places and again everybody wanted to sit near Jeffery. We worked out a deal that those friends not sitting next to Jeffery in the car going to and from McDonald's could sit next to him in McDonald's.

Finally, the food arrived and as I watched the second glass of pop hit the floor, I knew I was glad I brought the kids here instead of my kitchen.

As the kids helped Jeffery open his gifts we all ooed and ahed as each treasure was uncovered. I was so excited to see the lovely gifts the children had brought; hand cuffs, dart gun, clay, finger paints, trucks, books, tapes, a summer outfit, lots of balloons and MAGIC ROCKS! The magic rocks were sent to school for a science project for all the first grade to enjoy.

The kids grew antsy and it was time to leave, but I still had 45 minutes until it was time for them to go home. We went back to our house and the kids enjoyed Jeffery's fish tank and lying on Jeffery's waterbed. Soon they were busy with the gifts and before I knew it, the time had come to bring all the party goers home.

It was exhausting but well worth the time spent. In most ways, it was just like the parties I'd given my older sons, and that was what was so neat about the moment.

It's now the middle of March and I'm happy to report that another of my goals for my son has been reached. On March 9, during open house at school, Sara, one of the party goers, informed me she was inviting Jeffery to her party because he invited her to his party.

It's history in the making.

Pat and Harlan Tietz have been married 16 years and live in Shakopee, Minnesota, with Mike (14), Brian (12) and Jeffery (8). Pat and Harlan have always been involved with their children's education and activities but getting Jeffery's needs met has been an education in itself. Pat spends many hours in workshops and seminars to learn how to better help her son. She serves on the ARC-Suburban Board of Directors and chairs the Scott County Planning Committee for ARC, as well as working on other committees through school. Harlan spends his time supporting Pat's efforts by helping to keep all quiet on the home front.

The "Altimate Radest Kid in the Hole Wide World"

Ann Keeffe

Dan came to Oakwood Elementary in the fall of 1988. He became a part of two third grade classrooms as a result of the efforts of his special education teacher, the energy and interest of two regular education teachers, and the kids in their classes. Nine year old Dan has Huntington's disease and has experienced a gradual loss of all motor abilities since he was three. His cognitive abilities have not been affected.

His inclusion in third grade began with Dan joining Mrs. Anderson's class for morning meeting every day. After a couple of weeks the kids began to ask why Dan had to leave and couldn't stay longer. That's all it took. Dan began to stay longer every day, sometimes up to lunch time. He became involved in a variety of subjects. This was important for him, because it gave him the opportunity to use his cognitive/intellectual abilities and skills. He became a big part of the class, and was assigned to be part of a different group each week after the kids fought so much over who would be his partner each day. He also began to join Mrs. Cargill's class every afternoon. He particularly enjoyed book sharing time and making more new friends.

Dan and friends.

At Dan's midyear conference, the main request of his parents was that he spend more time in the two third grade classes. Dan did spend more and more time in both classes. It all blossomed as teachers and kids suggested more involvement and ways to include Dan. Eventually, he spent most of his time in the two classes. The school nurse would give him his gastrostomy tube feedings in the regular class instead of taking him to the special education room. The teachers and students experienced Dan having seizures and developed a smooth system to call for help when needed, as it was no longer necessary for a special education staff

Dan shows off his jack-o-lantern.

person to be present whenever Dan was in one of the regular classes. Dan also carried a journal for teachers and kids to write about activities he was part of. One of the entries was, "To Dan, the altimate radest kid in the hole wide world." Whenever Dan entered one of the third grade classes, he would be greeted with warm and enthusiastic greetings of, "Hi Dan!" and pulled into whatever activity was going on. On the days when Dan was absent, the teachers and students were concerned and really missed him. They made him cards and sent home notes in his journal to let him know how much he was missed.

The highlights of Dan's integration have included:

- Dan was in the class play, Cinderella, where he played the coach and the coachman.
- Dan loved playing with the classroom pets, a snake and two rats, along with his classmates.
- Dan showed a clear preference for the third grade classes over the segregated special education classes by staying more alert and smiling and vocalizing more.
- Dan and his third grade friends were featured in a district video promoting integration.
- Dan received an award for teaching us the meaning of integration.
- Dan's peers gave him gifts at holidays that reflected how normally they viewed him. For example, they gave him candy even though he can't take anything by mouth and pencils even though he doesn't write.

The classes that Dan was involved in evolved into more cooperative and positive environments for everyone.

Anne Keeffe is currently working on her Masters in Special Education at the University of Minnesota. She works for District #287 at Oakwood Elementary School in Plymouth, Minnesota. A major focus is integrating kids into as many regular education settings and activities as possible. She has worked as a teacher in District 287 with elementary and junior high children for seven years. Prior to that she was a teaching assistant and also worked in group homes and a special summer camp over several years. Anne is currently a member of the MNASH Integration Team as well as the District 287 Integration Committee.

Learning Together in"Community Classrooms"

Renee' Soule-Chapman

Among our most successful and beneficial integrated experiences have been our weekly trips to a grocery store and restaurant. Each week we take eight second grade students (four with severe disabilities and four of their peers without disabilities) on these learning excursions in the community and have found them to be beneficial for all of the students.

Through the use of environmental inventories, we have developed objectives and instructional programs for the students with and without disabilities. The typical second graders have worked on and gained skills in reading, math, using money, categorization, ordering and paying for food, comparing prices, measurements, and restaurant and grocery etiquette. The students with severe disabilities have worked on a variety of objectives including reaching, grasping, releasing, holding their heads up, visually attending, greeting others, communication, eating, and self-feeding.

These trips have been a valuable learning experience for the students involved. I feel that one important factor has been the use of environmental inventories. Developing these inventories by observing the typical students has given the inventories and the identified objectives more validity.

A continuing challenge has been the funding for this community learning, but some creative solutions have been developed. One idea has been for students to purchase and deliver lunches to staff. Menus and order forms were created and disseminated to staff. The students help to copy, fold, and pass out the menus and order forms to school staff on Monday. The prices of the food items are increased by 15%. Staff members turn in their orders and money by Friday morning and then the students go to the restaurant, purchase the food, and deliver the meals to the staff at lunch time. Another idea has been for staff members to give the students small grocery lists and money and those purchases are made also.

Renee' Soule-Chapman has taught special education for 15 years (14 in Minneapolis, Minnesota) and worked with children with learning disabilities and also students with moderate or severe disabilities. Twelve of those years she taught in segregated settings where trying to integrate children was challenging and often difficult. The last two years she has been at Dowling School, where classes are integrated and she is having fun exploring the multitude of ways in which the children can learn together.

Jessica's Circle of Friends

Jeannette DeRouin

This is not my story as much as it is the story of the fourth grade of 1986-87. Jessica is a girl with a physically degenerative disease. She has used a wheelchair for about three years. She is a quiet, hard working, but nonassertive child. Six of her friends from her class felt that she was not doing as much for herself as she could and that she was becoming too dependent on them. They met first with their classroom teacher and then with the special education teacher to make suggestions that they felt would help Jessica be more independent. The girls confronted Jessica with her lack of participation in class and presented their suggestions to her. She appeared to grow taller in her wheelchair as the girls shared their interest with her. Their suggestions were: (a) change places in the room to make new friends; (b) ask someone for help if you need it — don't just sit there; (c) read a couple of sentences during oral reading — it's okay if you're slow; (d) let those who are interested take turns pushing your wheelchair — even the boys, they can be nice; (e) start to lunch earlier and you can push yourself; and (f) take responsibility for yourself.

The classroom teacher's cooperation and implementation of suggestions was very helpful. However, the girls' initiative and involvement in this situation and the fact that they presented the suggestions to Jessica themselves was the biggest plus. The adults were in the background only as support. When Jessica began to slip back into some of her old behaviors later in the year, the girls again asked to meet and talk with her. Much of her progress was sustained throughout that year.

Both Jessica and her friends benefitted from this experience. The girls indicated some feelings of guilt about her dependence on them and their frustration with not wanting to be so responsible. They felt much closer to her after the new plan and much less guilty. Jessica was the happiest she has ever been in school.

We now use a similar process to help other students with disabilities be members of their classes. We found it helpful to approach the class before the student with a disability enters. By doing so it is easier to find the organizers in the group and involve several students rather than just one or two in the process of including students with disabilities.

Jeannette DeRouin teaches elementary age students with mild mental disabilities at Bishop Elementary School in Rochester, Minnesota.

Cath, Jess, Jules, and Ames... A Story of Friendship

Terri Vandercook, Diane Fleetham, Sharon Sinclair, and Rebecca Rice Tetlie

Catherine, Jessica, Julie, and Amy are fourth grade classmates and friends who attend Battle Creek Elementary School in St. Paul. All four are accurately described as loving, beautiful, giggly, funny, endearing, and charming young women. Catherine is a child who has Rett Syndrome and requires assistance from others in order to participate and contribute at home, at school, and in her community. When the time came for her to attend the public school, it was very important to her mother that she attend school with typical children, and not just with peers who also had identified disabilities. She knew that Catherine should be around typical peers to learn from them, to get to know them, and for them to know her. Until last year, the majority of her educational program took place in a self-contained special education classroom within the elementary school. Not surprisingly, being educated in a separate room isolated Catherine from her same age peers without disabilities. She had been provided with some short-term opportunities for interacting with peers via a Special Friends approach (Voeltz et al., 1983). The Special Friends approach provides an initial strategy that might be used to bring children with and without identified disabilities together and give them the opportunity to interact and get to know one another in special activities; but, it was never intended to be an acceptable substitute for participating in typical, naturally occurring interactions (regular class involvement).

Catherine and Jessica in physical education class.

Catherine has many friends both at school and in her neighborhood, but Julie, Amy, and Jessica are her closest friends and comprise that inner circle we can all relate to as essential for achieving a desirable quality of life. Jessica, Julie, Amy and others are naturally skilled at getting the best out of Catherine, and so they are wonderful teachers, aswell as friends. Toward the end of last school year, Catherine's educational team decided to design a school day that provided her with more opportunities to be a regular member of the third grade class of which Julie, Amy, and Jessica were part. The McGill Action Planning System process (MAPS) was used to assist in this goal. The planning team included family members, special educators, regular educators, therapists, peers (Amy, Jessica, Julie) and Catherine. The MAPS process confirmed and deepened the relationship between Catherine and her friends. Amy, Julie, and Jessica got to know her family, her history and her needs from others' perspectives. They were recognized as valued and contributing members of Catherine's team.

When Jessica, Julie, and Amy were invited to join the planning session for meeting Catherine's needs in regular classes and other typical school environments, they took their role very seriously. Prior to the meeting, they came up with an entire list of activities that she could be a part of. They included specific strategies for helping her to learn and participate as well. They did not stop with simply generating the list; they quickly sprung into action and facilitated her participation by including her in the classroom Easter egg hunt, developing a collection of picture books of people for her to look at, assisting her to do Mousercize in gym class, developing match-to-sample games called "egg carton A,B,C's" and "egg carton 1,2,3's", and getting more friends for her. They also gave her a nickname, "Cath", to go with theirs: Jess, Jules, and Ames. During physical education, Cath had many partners and each one, boy or girl, was pleased and proud to help their friend participate. They had fun as well.

The relationships which Cath enjoys with her peers did not come easily or automatically, as is illustrated by the following story. Cath was walking out to the playground during gym time with Jules, Ames, and Jess and a boy came over and said, "Hi Catherine!" One of the girls said, "I thought you didn't like Catherine". He responded, "I used to be afraid of her, but that was before I knew her. Now I like her!" That ended the conversation and he joined the gang in walking to the playground.

One of the first questions asked in the MAPS process is, "What is your dream for Cath as an adult?" Catherine's mom hoped that as an adult Cath would live with friends that she cared about and who cared about her. Jess responded immediately that she hoped that she and Jules and Ames could be the friends that live with her when she grows up; Jules and Ames nodded affirmatively. The dream question in the MAPS process is followed by the very difficult question, "What is your nightmare?" Catherine's mom responded that her nightmare for Cath was to be alone. The responses to these two questions illustrate beautifully why this story of friendship is so important. It is a step toward the dream and away from the nightmare.

One of the last questions asked during the MAPS process was, "What are Catherine's needs?" One of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Catherine and Amy read together.

needs identified by the educators on the team was a need for other people to be able to accept and deal with Cath's drooling because she drools a lot. Her friends very matter-of-factly and comfortably address the need by taking her bandana to help her wipe her mouth or chin. Her difficulty in swallowing fluid is part, a very small part, of just who Catherine is. Her peers accept it. That acceptance is not confined to just Ames, Jess, and Jules. When the class of third graders were asked last year what they had learned from having Cath in their class, one boy raised his hand and explained that they had learned how to help her use her bandana to wipe her mouth. When the entire class was asked if that was okay with all of them, they all nodded eagerly and tried to explain more explicitly that it was really very easy: "you just take her hand and...".

The descriptor most frequently used in communicating the outcomes for Catherine's inclusion in regular class activities with her peers was "happy". In fact, the first observation from everyone, including the regular third grade teacher, special education support staff, family, and peers was, "Cath is so happy!" Her third grade classmates said that they could tell she was happy to be with them because she had smiles on her face more often.

If the primary goal of education is to prepare students to be participants and contributors in the community, now as well as in the future, then the integration of students with disabilities is extremely important for Cath, Jess, Jules and Ames. Each of these children is enriched by having the opportunity to learn from one another, grow to care for one another, and gain the attitudes, skills, and values necessary for our communities to support the inclusion of all citizens. As V.W. von Goethe observed, "The things which our friends do with and for us form a portion of our lives; for they strengthen and advance our personality." Cath, Jess, Jules, and Ames are definitely strengthening and advancing one another, and are providing a joyous and hopeful vision for us all!

Terri Vandercook is Associate Director of the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. Diane Fleetham is Catherine's mother and a third grade teacher at Webster Elementary School in St. Paul. Sharon Sinclair is an occupational therapist and Rebecca Rice Tetlie is a communications disorders specialist, both with the St. Paul Public Schools.

Jeffrey is a Member of the Fourth Grade

Sue Wolff

Jeffrey Frigaard is a student in Mr. Spehar's fourth grade class at Lincoln Park Elementary in Duluth. Like his classmates, Jeff belongs to a reading group, eats lunch with other children, plays Kaiser Ball in gym, and has several classmates with whom he is close friends. Unlike his classmates, Jeff has multiple disabilities including severe mental retardation and a severe physical disability. He does not speak and he uses a wheelchair. Unlike most children with such severe disabilities, Jeff is a member of a regular class. All involved feel that Jeff, as well as his classmates, have benefitted from his inclusion in fourth grade. I spent a day observing Jeff and his classmates and talking to those involved and can certainly agree that Jeff's inclusion is beneficial and that his story is an important one to share.

Jeff entered his fourth grade classroom a couple of minutes after his classmates, and was involved with them in a variety of activities throughout the day. Although Jeff doesn't read he participated in a reading group. He had his own reading book and a classmate sitting beside him showed him pictures. At lunch, three of Jeff's friends sat and talked with him as a teaching assistant helped him to eat. During P. E. Jeff played Kaiser Ball along with his classmates. The object of Kaiser Ball is to knock over three "pins" (plastic Coke bottles) which belong to the opposing team, using a ball. In this game Jeff, along with the help of two of his classmates, had the important job of guarding one of the pins. Jeff made a good pin guard, with his two friends pushing him back and forth in his wheelchair in order to prevent the balls from hitting the pins. This seemed to be a fun activity for all of the children and was one in which Jeff could be an active participant. He smiled a lot and really seemed to enjoy it. These are just three of the many examples of Jeff's inclusion in his class which show his success there. The major keys to Jeff's success are the people involved in making his inclusion work.

During the day I spent at Lincoln Park Elementary, I had a chance to talk with and observe several individuals involved in making Jeff's inclusion work. In talking with Jeff's mom, Lynne, I learned why she and others feel it is so important for him to be a member of a regular class. As Lynne put it "We felt that Jeff had everything to gain and nothing to lose by being integrated." Jeff's mom feels that his life now is full of opportunities and that his school and community have opened up to him as a result of his inclusion, opportunities he may have never had if he had continued in a segregated class.

Vital to making Jeff's inclusion work is the team of educators that surrounds him, particularly Tom, his fourth grade teacher; Julie, his special education teacher; and Renee, the teaching assistant. All of these people are important in making Jeff's inclusion a success. Tom is responsible for making sure that Jeff fits into the classroom and is included to the greatest extent possible. Julie is responsible for making sure that Jeff is learning as much as possible through his inclusion, and Renee is responsible for providing whatever assistance Jeff needs during his daily activities. All of these educators play an important role in Jeff's inclusion.

Playing an equally important role are Jeff's classmates. They have accepted him as he is. Many of them consider him to be a close friend and as his friend Bjorn puts it, "It's important for Jeff to have friends. He likes to have people talk to him." Jeff's friend Todd likes playing with Jeff in gym and playing computer games with him. Todd sums up his relationship with Jeff as "He's my buddy, I like him." Jeff's friend Autumn likes him too and likes to sit with him at lunch. She said, "I like Jeff a lot, I hope we get to be in the same class again next year." Jeff's friend Jeremy knows that they won't be in the same class next year and said, "I like Jeff a lot and I'm sorry we won't be in the same class next year. I'll really miss him. I hope I'll see him around." From these examples, it is obvious that Jeff has developed some important friendships in his class and that his friends are key to making his inclusion a success.

Based upon my observation, I would add that not only Jeff, but his classmates as well, have benefitted from his inclusion. The other children have learned to accept and like someone with obvious differences. As his friend Tina puts it, "We're pretty lucky to have him here. There are only a few kids like Jeffrey in regular classes and we're really lucky to be one of those classes."

Sue Wolff has just completed her masters program in special education at the University of Minnesota. For the past year she was the project assistant on the Minnesota Integrated Education Technical Assistance Project where she participated in a variety of activities and projects relating to integrated education. She has just started a new position as an Integration Facilitator for the Rum River Special Education Cooperative in central Minnesota.

Diversity is an Asset to Learning

Barb Marti

Tim, a student with autistic characteristics, is mainstreamed into a non-graded upper elementary classroom. He participates in homeroom, gym, music, art, lunch, recess, library, computer, individualized math, and special events with his classmates.

Tim's regular education classroom teacher believes that diversity is an asset to learning and has welcomed him into her classroom. Although a staff person with specialized training is provided to assist Tim in his regular classroom, that person's assistance is often not needed as the classroom teacher and other students often provide the needed assistance. I think the fact that the classroom teacher and typical students have accepted Tim into their classroom and are willing to accommodate his needs are the biggest factors in his success. The willingness of the special education staff to give up "ownership" of Tim helped also.

Tim has definitely benefitted from his participation in the regular classroom. He talks often about sitting in his desk in the regular classroom. He has made several friends there and as a result his speech and language skills have improved. His friends have figured ways to include him successfully in a variety of activities. One example is kickball where he kicks the ball himself and his friends help him run the bases. His friends have also learned to communicate with him appropriately, phrasing questions and comments in such a way that he can understand them and respond appropriately.

Two challenges we have faced in mainstreaming Tim are both due to the fact that he is not a full-time member of the regular class. One challenge is freeing a staff person to accompany Tim to mainstream activities. The second challenge is getting him involved in all of the activities of his regular class. There have been some activities that he could have been a part of but, due to a lack of communication between special and regular educators, he was not included.

Some recommendations for making future integrated experiences successful would be:

1. Start planning in the spring for the following fall. Identify regular educators to collaborate with and start communicating with them right away.

2. Ask the classroom teacher to treat the student with disabilities as much like other students as possible. Encourage the classroom teacher to give the student with disabilities the same amount of attention as she or he gives other students and to use the same disciplinary procedures with the student with disabilities as she or he would with other students.

3. Special educators need to "step back" from the student with disabilities whenever possible in order to allow the classroom teacher and typical students to support and assist the student.

Barb Marti has served as a teacher with District #917, an intermediate school district serving students with low incidence disabilities throughout Dakota County, Minnesota, for the past five years. Barb tried to be viewed as a "regular" teacher by teaching sign language and planning physical education activities for Tim's mainstream class.

Gina

Joan Peterson

Gina has participated in a regular homeroom all year. She eagerly leaves the special education room, turns in the right direction, enters the homeroom independently, and with one cue can find her chair. The highlight was the day she sat sad faced and watched as all the other students in homeroom were handed a paper that was to go home. To her surprise and delight she was also handed one. She carried that paper the length of the school to the special education room, got her coat, and continued to carry the paper. She still had it when last seen, mounting the steps of the bus to go home. We had never before observed Gina carry anything without dropping, ripping, or eating it.

Joan Peterson is a teacher who works with students labeled trainably mentally handicapped for District #287 at Sandburg Middle School, in Robbinsdale, Minnesota.

AMBER OF LASQUETI ISLAND

Amber Integrates her District

Judy Peterson

Amber started kindergarten at False Bay School on Lasqueti Island in British Columbia at five years of age - a tiny thing in a McLaren buggy!

Many of her classmates in the third, fourth, and fifth grade classes in our three room school are children who began kindergarten with her. Their friendships are time-tested and true. As new children enter the school when they move to the island, the acceptance and love that Amber's peers show her sets the tone. Most recently, two nine year old boys both new on Lasqueti have become friends of Amber. They are a tad too gallant for this feminist mom, but I can see the value in their care and concern. On trips they vie as "pusher."

The kids in the school are very comfortable with Amber's variety of equipment, and her wheelchair is a favorite spot. Selina (8) told me her head couldn't relax as far forward as the wheelchair was set, so we moved it to her comfort zone. Amber seemed to like the change, too. Her "stuff" does not form barriers - all the kids use it.

Amber's teacher, Robert Boates, is a loving and accepting man who is very concerned for the self esteem and well-being of all the class, Amber included. Therefore, even in light of the fact that he doesn't know a thing about "special education," Amber is a valued member of his class.

Though at first a number of parents were nearly enraged about the possibility of their children suffering as a result of Amber siphoning off time, energy, and supplies, those same parents now truly appreciate what Amber has given their children. I often have had parents come to me to express their delight at seeing their child relating to Amber in a comfortable, natural, and joyful way.

Our district has had special education classes for all the children, save Amber. She's always been integrated. This summer those walls are being torn down and this September, 1989 all children in the district are being integrated into neighborhood schools in regular classrooms. For the first time this spring, job descriptions carried the sentence: ". . .and the successful applicant will adhere to the District policy of integrating special needs children into regular classrooms. . ." It only took Amber five years to successfully integrate her whole district!

Friendship

Judy Peterson

On the way to a conference this spring I picked up some slides I thought I might want to show that included Amber's fourth grade class trip to an Indian Longhouse where the children were taught a number of skills, such as weaving cedar into mats and thongs, preparing food in the Indian manner, fire building, and cooking. Amber's class had been paired with a class they did not know from Vancouver. She returned with a piece of paper in her wheelchair bag on which, in a childish scrawl was written, "Maria del rocaRey" and an address. Her classmate told me that Maria was Amber's new friend. I thought that was nice but did not give it another thought until I saw the slides. Quick tears stung my eyes as I saw on the screen that, indeed, Maria was Amber's new friend, a child we'd never seen before - or since. As the pictures showed so eloquently, they chose to be each other's friends and to spend time together. And I hadn't really GOTTEN IT!! I had prints made from the slides to send to Maria, and a set to share the tale.

Amber and Marie enjoy a cookout.

Amber on a Surfboard!

Judy Peterson

Amber's classmates write in her journal regularly. Here is one of my favorite entries, a contribution from a classmate who just returned from Hawaii. Amber is pictured on a surfboard in her wheelchair (no tie downs, you'll see) with glorious waves and her hair blowing in the breeze.

Ski Trip

Judy Peterson

Amber's class went on a skiing field trip last winter, and we decided not to have her participate (she can't ski, doesn't really love cold weather, has trouble getting to sleep at night and would share her sleep space with 20 riotous 9 and 10 year olds, etc.). Well, did we ever get flack from her classmates!! "Why can't she come!!?" (indignant). "She's our classmate!" "We want her to come!" "It's not fair," etc. Finally we had to agree that it wouldn't happen again that she'd stay behind and suggested the kids figure out a way for her to participate next time. The kids returned from the trip and reported that there was a guy there in a wheelchair and that Amber could have participated. Boy, were our faces red!

Daily News Time

Judy Peterson

Every day it's Amber's job to tell the daily news at school. This is how she does it.

A volunteer classmate records the news that I've written out at home, starting with the title, "Amber's News," on a tape recorder that goes back and forth to class with Amber. When she's called upon, Amber hits her big red switch and the child's voice tells of what's happened.

Once the news was of twin kid goats that had been born and an announcement of their impending visit to the class that afternoon. Amber has also shared news about going to get a new wheelchair. She once brought in her EEG and a short video about epilepsy. In this way we have been able to use news time as a vehicle to demystify Amber's physical concerns, in addition to giving information about her life away from school.

Robert, Amber's teacher, says that her classmates willingly volunteer to do the recordings and that they love her news and often applaud. News time is an important time of sharing that draws Amber into the circle.

Amber and her classmates learn from their teacher.

Judy Peterson and her husband Michael moved to Lasqueti, an isolated rural island, fifteen years ago to raise children and vegetables. They have raised eight children, four of whom are still at home and raise enough vegetables to feed the entire family. Judy works outside the home as a school secretary.

Cooperative Games Class

Jackie Levin

Cooperative Games is a class involving 12 typical fifth grade students from School District 281 and four students with disabilities from special education District 287. The class met for thirty minutes, twice a week, over an eight week period. Students were divided into groups of four and played a variety of board, card, and computer games of their choice.

The purpose of the class was to give students a chance to develop friendships; to have fun playing games they enjoy; and to increase their communication, decision-making, and problem-solving skills within a leisure context. The class was initiated and taught by Jackie Levin and Lynn Scherfenberg, two special education support staff from District 287.

Terese is a student with disabilities who participated in the Cooperative Games class. The following story was written by a staff member and attempts to relate Terese's experience as she might communicate them.

"At first I wasn't sure what this class was all about. There were so many new kids and I had to go to a new room where I had to really concentrate hard to steer my electric wheelchair.

I was kind of quiet during the first class when I met the other kids in my group — Scott, Ryan, and Brian — all boys! The guys in my group talked to me right away and really seemed to like me.

The first game we played was a computer game. I didn't totally understand it but that didn't matter because I got to use the joystick and everyone cheered when I changed the pictures on the screen.

Brian and Terese play Uno.

My favorite game was Uno which is a card game we played a few times. Scott and I made a team and acted as one player. He did some parts of the game and I did other parts. For example, Scott put cards in a holder and spread them out so it was easier for me to pick them up. He also put a little silly putty on the end of my finger so I could draw one card at a time from the deck. Scott and I made such a great team playing Uno that we played other card games and some board games that way too.

My new friends were always coming up with great ideas for me to try so that everyone in our group could play the game (by the way, this was one of the rules of our class). I really liked the Cooperative Games class and I know Scott, Ryan, and Brian did too.

Following is feedback from the typical students who participated in the Cooperative Games class:

1. What did you like about the class?

- We met new friends and got to play games.
- It was fun playing games and teaching the kids from 287.
- Being with kids from 287 and playing games.
- That everyone made everyone happy.
- I made friends and that made me feel good.
- Making friends and playing games.
- Working together and having fun.
- You learn more about the kids from 287.
- The kids, the games, and the feeling that I'm doing something good.
- Playing with the kids from 287.
- You get to know the kids from 287 better.

2. What would you change?

- More time together.
- Having the class longer and every day.
- More days of the week.
- Nothing.
- Nothing!!
- Get more computer games.
- Nothing.
- Nothing.
- Nothing.
- Nothing, it was really organized.
- More kids from 287.
- More kids from 287.

3. What did you learn about yourself or the students in class?

- Good friends can be handicapped.
- I could teach people things.
- You need patience to work with kids from 287.
- That we're all alike in a way.
- That they (kids from 287) are the same and there is nothing wrong with them.
- Looks may be deceiving.
- We have to be patient with them (kids from 287).

•I learned you have to be patient.

•That EVERYBODY likes to and should feel part of the game.

•They are special too.

•They're the same as us.

Jackie Levin has worked in special education for the past 12 years as a communication disorders specialist, cognition support specialist, educational case manager, and coordinator of the District 287 Simple Technology Project. She is also a consultant for ABLENET, a nonprofit organization based in Minneapolis providing simple technology and support services to people with severe disabilities. District 281 and Special Education District 287 are located in the western suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Making Integration Work: Tips, Benefits, Challenges, and Recommendations

Chris Zweber

We have several students integrated into regular education classes, such as physical education, choir, exploratory classes (i.e., robotics, art, fun with fitness, TLC newspaper, and sign language), art class, etc. Below are tips for making integration work, benefits of integration, challenges and barriers to integration, and recommendations for additional integration experiences.

Tips for Making Integration Work

1) Relax and have a sense of humor. The regular education staff may be scared and new to working with students with disabilities. Give them the support they need, but don't get hung up on the little things.

2) Be prepared to answer questions. The other staff will ask lots of questions pertaining to integration, be prepared to answer them.

3) Respect all students rights. Interact with students with disabilities as you would with students without disabilities.

4) Be ORGANIZED. A schedule will be needed: provide one. Activity and worksheet alterations will be needed: do it. Adequate staff will be needed: provide it.

5) Be AWARE. Other people have rights, too. If we, as special educators push too hard, too fast, we stand the chance of rejection.

6) TRY anything and everything.

Benefits of Integration

1) Increased peer interactions.

2) Increased receptive and expressive language skills.

3) Acceptance of students with disabilities by typical students.

4) Improved self-concepts.

5) Increased interactions between special and regular educators. They have more in common and share common goals and interests.

Challenges and Barriers to Integration

1) Timing. With regular education classes, much preparation is needed ahead of time and obviously right before class. Students with multiple handicaps are often rushed or left out if there is not sufficient time.

2) Prep Time. You can have great ideas, but without the time for planning, progress is slow.

3) Instructors Who Are Not Cooperative or Have Overcrowded Classes. Some instructors may have great classes but no room for one or two more.

Recommendations for Additional Integration Experiences

1) Start planning for integration during workshop week.

2) Plan on exploratory classes to be taught by special education staff for students with and without disabilities.

3) Design opportunities for students with the most severe disabilities and students with autism to be integrated.

Chris Zweber received her bachelor's degree in Special Education from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota in 1980. She has been a teacher of students with severe disabilities at Hennepin Technical Institute for the past nine years and is very committed to expanding integrated options for the students with whom she works.

Reading Partners: A Bridge Between Special Education and Regular Education

Margaret Mary Sulentic, Mark Williams, Peggy L. Martin

Three colleagues put their heads together to plan a curriculum that would meet the needs of two diverse groups of students. Together 20 regular education students labelled at high risk and thirteen students with mental disabilities studied, explored, and mastered a series of functional vocabulary units for eight months during an academic year. Using the Brigance Functional Vocabulary and Wilson's Essential Word List as a basis for instruction, the three educators developed a variety of activities for using the vocabulary. Some of the activities were writing stories and recipes, playing games like "Concentration" and "Bang," developing computer applications of the vocabulary; plus a variety of other activities like cooking, following directions, and utilizing community resources that were extensions of the vocabulary units themselves. By using vocabulary that was essential and practical, and by planning experiences that extended the use of the vocabulary, we successfully provided a climate in which instruction was relevant and important to students. For instance, travel sign words were reinforced by viewing slides of signs, playing "Travel Word Bingo" and by taking trips into the community where the signs were in use. Students felt their instruction was useful as it was a part of their world.

Students with and without disabilities benefited from this experience. Regular education students demonstrated responsibility when dealing with their peers with disabilities. Students with disabilities formed trusting bonds and friendships with their regular education peers. A real sense of community and feeling of belonging were fostered by this type of instruction and the integrated setting created by the three teachers.

Administration, both district and Area Education Agency were extremely supportive of our efforts and encouragement was expressed often. We were given a great deal of freedom of choice when planning units. The community supported our efforts also, as one of the teachers applied for and was awarded a local grant to offset printing costs of teacher-made materials. Area businesses and parents were very accommodating and supportive as well.

Our biggest roadblocks were other regular educators who resisted the integration experience. Although they were not required to participate in any way, they appeared very critical of the integration experience. Comments such as, "Why integrate?" or "Will I have to do this type of thing?" typified some of their feelings toward the experience. These comments probably reflect that regular educators and others who have had little exposure to students with special needs may feel threatened or anxious about students with disabilities and those without learning together.

Prior to this integration experience, the members of the three-person teaching team attended an integration workshop. This led to the establishment of a building integration committee with a regular voice in informing faculty of integration within the building. Those who support integration seem to be naturally drawn together. This "togetherness" can function as a support system to those attempting to integrate. We suggest forming committees or task forces to explore integration voluntarily. Administrative support is essential if integration is to work.

Nathan and Barb - Reading Partners.

The following letter, from a regular education student epitomizes the events that successful integration can foster. Barb is a student at the same school as Jenny. Barb has a mental disability.

Dear Ms. Sulentic,

I was wondering if sometimes during skills if I could visit Barb's classroom. You see in the past two months Barb and I have become very very close. We share a lot of secrets.

I would like to get to know each and every student in Barb's class. Please let me know if this is possible.

Your Student,
Jenny Feldpouch

Margaret Mary Sulentic uses her sixth grade reading classroom to implement integration strategies. She has a Masters degree in Reading Education, is married, and has two children. Mark Williams teaches students with mental disabilities at River Hills School in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Mark has a Masters in Special Education and is active in his church. Peggy Martin taught students with mental disabilities for ten years. After completing her Masters in Special Education she accepted a position working with high school students with behavioral disorders. All three met while working in the Waterloo, Iowa public schools.

Tad...A Regular Kid Like Us

Jason Cardwell

Every morning we go to room 104 and pick up Tad. Tad is a 287 kid. That means he's mentally retarded. To me he's as normal as anyone I know. When we get to homeroom we talk and play with Tad. He's fun to play with. Over the months we have grown closer to Tad. We taught him how to say cake, and how to raise his hand when he is asked questions. Tad can do pretty much what we can do except he can't walk and talk normal.

When our homeroom teacher said we were having a 287 kid I thought "oh, god" not a 287 kid. We'll have to take care of him and other stuff. I proved myself wrong. I learned how to live and grow with 287 kids, and believe me it's very fun. I learned that they're not really different from us. And that he's special in more ways than one. Like he's caring and I think he really understands what we say. He appreciates us. If I had to do this project again I would.

Jason is currently an eighth grader at Plymouth Middle School in Plymouth, Minnesota, where he and Tad continue to be friends. Jason is an active and popular member of the student body and has opened the door for integrated experiences for a number of students with disabilities through his relationship with Tad.

He's Really a Nice Guy

Donna Schoberg

I was visiting a family who had just had a new baby daughter with Down syndrome. The parents both had a lot of questions about her potential for learning and what they could expect from her. As we talked, their 12 year old daughter remarked, "There's a kid in my homeroom with Down syndrome. He's really a nice guy." She really seemed to regard him as a peer. I thought this was quite remarkable for a 12 year old.

Donna Schoberg has been an Early Childhood Special Education teacher in Dakota County, Minnesota since 1971 and is also currently an Associate with Project Dakota, an outreach project in Dakota County, Minnesota.

Andy Joins Music Class

Martin Stubstad

At the beginning of the second quarter of the 1988-89 school year, Andy, one of my students with severe disabilities, was enrolled in the regular seventh grade General Music class. I had read the objectives for the class prior to Andy joining it and felt that it would be very appropriate for him. After the first class I asked the teacher, Mrs. Thompson, how it had gone. I couldn't hardly believe it when she said, "Andy is going to be a real contributor to the class, he appreciates so much more than the regular kids. Andy really gives me a more appreciative attitude toward teaching overall. Andy is a very special student who has just made 31 more friends."

I have integrated students with severe disabilities into many regular classes and have found integration to be very positive for my students. Integration has been positive for the parents of my students also. At our open house this year, parents were given the chance to visit each classroom. Andy's parents said that this is the first time that they have really felt a part of our school. For the first time they talked to other staff about Andy as a person, not as a disability.

In developing integrated experiences for my students, I have found that having a positive attitude when communicating with regular education staff members is a must. Believing that you can make integration work and making others believe it is the key. I have explained to staff members that we are going to make integration work not by setting academic objectives where students with severe disabilities have to compete with the peers without disabilities, but by providing experiences where they can grow socially. I have faced some challenges to integration. There are some staff and students who have said that it is not fair to have to sit with my students at lunch. There are some special education staff, who have not yet "seen the light," who have said things like, "What could they possibly get out of this?" I have found that the best way to overcome these objections is to be positive and believe that you can do it. I have found it helpful to work first with regular educators who have positive attitudes toward integration and then use those experiences to pave the way with less receptive regular educators.

Martin Stubstad works with junior high age students with moderate disabilities at John Adams Junior High in Rochester, Minnesota.

Creativity for Regular Class Time

Cathy Macdonald

Realization of goals for participation in a regular class is not accomplished solely through instruction on set objectives. Implementation of objectives is typically scheduled for only a small percentage of the time spent in a regular class. The team must plan beyond objectives and instructional procedures and look at how the student with disabilities will spend the remainder of time in class. While strict scheduling of every minute of time is unnecessary and unrealistic, educators do need to keep abreast of curricular activities and decide how the student will participate ahead of time and what, if any, adaptations or alternate activities must be developed. Will the student complete all or part of a project? Will he work with another student? What alternate activities can the student do if there are times he cannot participate in what others are doing? Overriding goals of participation and inclusion should be considered at all times. To illustrate, possible use of time in a small engines class for a student with severe disabilities could include the following points:

1. Each student was given the assignment to bring an engine part with a malfunction from home. Dave, a student with disabilities, could easily participate with some help from his parents. After the parents were notified of the project, they could give Dave the defective part and a picture of the machine it came from to take to school. Perhaps Dave's project could be one of the first presented in class and the teacher could talk through the problem with Dave as a demonstration for classmates to prepare them for their presentations.

2. Look for simple adaptations. Can Dave use a power screwdriver without having it slip off the screws if it's a cordless tool and the battery is low? The low battery could make the movement slower and more controllable.

3. Dave has his own non-operational car at home that he tinkers with along with his Dad. Could Dave keep a picture of his car in his wallet as a way to initiate conversation?

4. Look for ways the student can help others. Dave can pass tools to his friends in small engines because they are color coded. A classmate can call for a "red 1/8 wrench" and Dave will choose correctly by finding the tool marked with red. Classmates are still able to use the tools correct name and just give Dave a color cue first.

5. Classmates could design or make adaptations for Dave for extra credit.

Teacher Watching

Cathy Macdonald

Dawn, a middle school student with moderate disabilities, attends a math class in which the teacher is very warm and continuously recognizing and including individual students as she teaches. Clearly, Dawn's favorite activity in math class is watching the teacher. She knows that if she watches long enough, she will be reinforced by a look, a comment, or another signal that she is a valued member of the class.

The team made a decision to accommodate Dawn's interest in watching the teacher for a short period of time during each class period. This is done in the context of an independent learning task in which Dawn participates daily. She is given fifteen minutes for the task, which allows ample time to complete the work and do some "teacher watching."

The team has learned not to be tied to their own agenda for making every minute in math class "meaningful" or "functional" for Dawn. They have recognized the importance and reinforcement value of "teacher watching" to Dawn, as well as its positive social effects for Dawn and the teacher. Moral: Don't get so hung up on time that you can't listen to a student's preferences and needs when planning participation and membership in regular classes.

"I Love Going to Choir"

Cathy Macdonald

One evening in May, Michelle was a thrilled performer at the middle school spring choir concert. She had practiced for weeks with her classmates, and, as one of the other students remarked, "She knows the words to the songs better than a lot of the other kids."

Michelle's favorite song was "Shades," where all the students used sunglasses for props and sang about how cool they looked wearing their shades. "Shades" and the other tunes all included some simple choreography and friends around Michelle helped to make sure she kicked a leg or put on her shades at the right moment with a gentle prompt here and there.

Michelle made the following comments about being in choir, "Choir is a thing where you just go and you enjoy it, enjoy yourself. . .I mean choir is really nice to have. It's more like my favorite thing is that I love going to choir. I think that choir is a really good thing to go to."

Regular Class Teachers Want to Know More

Cathy Macdonald

An eighth grade science class teacher recently commented, "I need training and time to interact with special educators who can help me integrate special students more totally into my class. I feel like I'd like to do more, but I don't know just where to go with the program."

Sentiments like this are much more common than I ever expected. As an integration facilitator, it has become clear to me that regular education teachers want to know more so they can do more. It is the job of special educators to empower them to do just that. Certainly team meetings and written programs are sources of knowledge for teachers, but the idea of more meetings and written products doesn't seem to provide a solution.

By what other means, then, can regular class teachers get the information they need about students with disabilities? Open the communication lines. As special educators, you can initiate a valuable dialogue with regular class teachers. Whenever you go to a regular class, talk with the teacher about a students' progress on objectives, interactions with peers, or even a funny incident that happened in that class. Be specific. Give examples of a student's behavior that you have observed in that class. For example, "I saw Bill get his paint shirt today without any prompts. We've been trying to get him to respond to changes in his environment and to initiate action. He saw the other kids getting their shirts and he just followed right along!" This type of sharing with teachers often triggers their own comments and observations about students with disabilities, providing useful information from a new perspective. Let teachers know that these contributions are very valuable and much appreciated. An investment of a few minutes time can generate increased collaborative efforts between team members and give regular class teachers the knowledge they seek to become valuable contributors to the education of all of their students.

"You're Dead Meat!"

Cathy Macdonald

When we hear the word integration, we often think about things such as social learning, normalization, inclusion, and membership. Students sometimes show us that these outcomes are really happening in strangely wonderful ways.

Prior to being integrated, Dana, a middle school student, was known as a shy observer who did not initiate many interactions or activities on her own. When Dana became a member of a math class this year, several of the students soon became her friends. Dana and classmates socialized, worked together on her alternate assignments, and regularly teased and had fun together. Her shyness faded and she could be observed talking and giggling with classmates daily. Recently, a friend of Dana's in class was playfully teasing her about doing her work. We can look at Dana's response to him as a measure of the success of her age-appropriate inclusion — "You're dead meat!"

Cathy Macdonald is an Education Specialist for the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. She has spent time in the past school year facilitating quality integration experiences in regular classes for students at two middle school sites.

INTEGRATION WORKS: ONE TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE

Why Not Try French Class?

Karen Hart

I worked with students with moderate to severe disabilities at Northeast Junior High in Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 1980-1985. From the beginning, I mainstreamed students into art, music, physical education, home economics, and shop. During the summer of 1984, one of my students, Stephanie went to Europe with her parents. When she returned to school, we thought, "Why not try French class?" The teacher, Nancy Olson Gustafson, was willing and took Steph into her beginning class. Many of the typical students were surprised that Steph had been to France. The kids were great! Many students helped Steph and included her in their groups.

French Class was a meaningful experience for Steph because she had been to France and was interested in the content. Although the content in many cases was too difficult, Steph was willing to try and Nancy, her teacher, accepted individualized objectives based on Steph's abilities. For example, while the regular students were in the library researching, Steph learned to use the card catalogue and helped the students find material in the catalogue. The attitude of Nancy was key. She facilitated groups and incorporated Stephanie into all aspects of her course. Steph received extra help in the special education class related to many of the French class units.

Stephanie enjoyed being in French class so much that she wanted to work all the time on her French. Because of her attitude, Nancy, wanted to include her in many activities. Nancy had talked to the regular education class peers to facilitate understanding and an acceptance of Steph. The regular education students developed respect for Steph and so did the staff. The special education students knew she went to French, and were very interested in what she was doing. Much language was generated around this experience both in the French class and in the special education class.

We began adapting materials and looking at activities after our integration experience with Steph. I would recommend a course analysis prior to placement. If I did not have the analysis, however, I would go ahead where appropriate and support the regular teacher and special student as much as possible.

Administrators, Parents, and Educators: A Collaborative Effort

Karen Hart

I began working with the Emerson Program in 1985. At that time Emerson was a special school for students with moderate/severe mental retardation located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I was assigned to the Roosevelt High School Satellite Program. Although the students in that program had been there for seven years, there was very little interaction between students with and without labeled disabilities. When I started, many of the parents of students with disabilities were upset because they did not receive school mailings and were not considered a part of the Roosevelt school community. Our program staff worked very hard to collaborate with teachers, to begin integrating students with disabilities and to help them become part of the total school environment. We were already a community based training program.

A parent advocacy group worked to inform the administration that they wanted their children to be a part of Roosevelt. The administration supported the parent group. Teacher advisory groups were set up and an Integration Task Force began at Emerson. In 1987, two years after I began with the Emerson program, we started another special education class at Edison High School for students with autism. The leadership of the principal, Dr. David Roffers, was the key. He was able to establish ownership in the regular buildings and taught me how to identify and involve key stakeholders.

Many of the regular education staff worked with us. Roosevelt is a big school, over 2,000 students, so we worked to get information to students through the school paper. One student was mainstreamed into choir for his first integrated school experience at the age of 18. He did so well that the choir teacher wanted to move him up to the next musical level. Regarding the inclusion of a teenage girl with disabilities into a typing class the typing teacher commented, "How can the others complain when she works so hard?"

There was a lot of skepticism. The predominant philosophy was to protect students with disabilities by separating them. We had to work hard to show the folks who didn't believe in integration that given proper supports, our students with severe handicaps can grow, bloom, and flourish in the mainstream.

Hanging Out Together

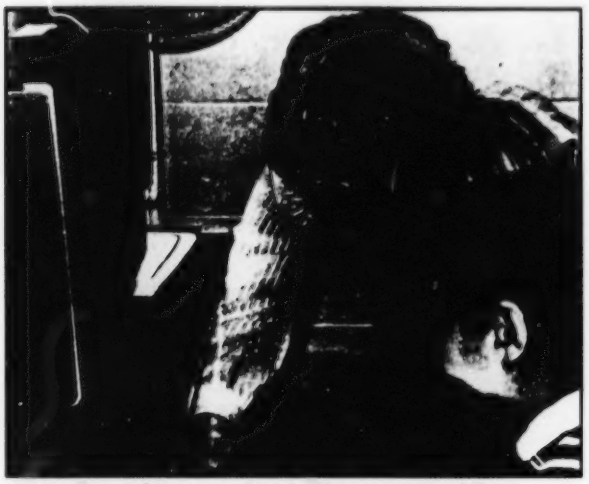
Karen Hart

During the Spring of 1985, my group of students with moderate/severe disabilities was paired with students from high potential English class for a weekly recreation and leisure experience at a park. We went after lunch and spent one hour there. Often times when we would return, there would be about 10-15 minutes before the students' next classes. During this time, I would take them to work in the computer lab. In both environments all of the involved students learned social skills, linguistic skills, and content.

During this experience we had incredible administrative support. Our principal, Dr. Larry Zimmerman, stated that the integration mission we held was for all children. Mary Mitchelson facilitated the enriched class group and we received help from Dr. Stuart Schleien of the University of Minnesota. Collaboration and teaming made the model work - the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Audobon Park Staff were part of the collaboration.

All the students who were involved enjoyed the weekly event! The students enjoyed the park experience and they all attended each week. An interesting thing happened in the computer lab. I had taught the students with disabilities how to use EZ Logo and the students from the enrichment class had not had that experience yet. One student from the enrichment class asked a student with disabilities to teach him how to work the program. Reverse peer tutoring!

Support is key. All parties must feel a true part of the team. Never underestimate what can be done with a good leader who spreads ownership to all team members!



Students working together in the computer lab.

Karen Hart has taught in Minneapolis for the past ten years. Her positions have included working in secondary special education programs for students with moderate and severe disabilities. Currently, she is a resource teacher in an elementary/K-6 school. Karen earned her masters degree from the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1984. Karen has three children, Becky, Andrew, and William.

Brent, a Ninth Grader at Mapleton High School

Ginny Hanel and Jennifer York

Brent lives just a few blocks from Mapleton High School in Mapleton, Minnesota. However, this is the first year that he has attended his neighborhood school. As part of his initiation into regular high school life in Mapleton, he is a member of the library club and of Mrs. Carlson's regular home economics class where he became part of a lab group with Darin, Damon, and Mike. Following is a letter written by Brent's mom, Ginny Hanel, that reflects how Brent, through his involvement in a regular class, has become a valued and contributing member of his home school community. This story is yet another testimony of what can happen for kids when family members and professionals who really care about community collaborate to make schools more inclusive for all kids. Ginny (Brent's mom), Deb Brieter (Brent's home support person), Debi Larson (Brent's special education teacher), Mrs. Gen Carlson (Brent's Home Economics teacher), Mr. Richard Kuball (superintendent), and Darin, Damon, and Mike (Brent's friends) worked together to make integration happen.

3/31/89

Brent continues to be in Home Ec. class. Second semester he acquired three new lab partners - an opportunity to make new friends! The Home Ec. teacher is a gem and enjoys having Brent in her class. I observed the class in February and couldn't believe how Brent blended in. It was "no big deal". He was one of the class.

Debi, Brent's special education teacher, has involved him in the library club at school also. She talked with the librarian about letting Brent, as part of the club, come to the library once a week and help stamp the school's name on incoming magazines. The librarian was pleased with this offer and now looks forward to Brent taking care of the task. Some other things that Brent has been involved in include eating lunch and mingling in the halls with the typical high school students, attending a school dance, and being involved with the all school science project.

Another group Brent is involved with is Future Homemakers of America (FHA). Recently, there was a district meeting of all of the FHA chapters in this area. Each chapter was asked to prepare a skit or presentation which would be judged. The two boys that were Brent's Home Ec. partners during the first semester wanted to include him in a skit. Prior to their presentation, the Home Ec. teacher told me that they needed a lot of polishing, but nevertheless, they won first place! The judges said that they gave the boys first place because of the genuine friendship between Damon, Darin, and Brent. They went on to say that oftentimes someone like Brent can be "used" or "patronized" but that this was most certainly not the case with Brent and his new friends. The boys' friendship with Brent "the person" was clearly evident. Brent and his friends advanced to the state meeting to compete in front of 2,000 FHA members. They came away with a gold medal! I am just thrilled!

These are the highlights. Brent has been accepted. He is loving school, his new experiences, and his friends.

Damon, Brent, and Mike with their prize winning presentation.

Brent has been ascribed a lot of labels in his life (e.g., severe mental retardation, multihandicapped), but this year he has a label that means something and that has value in everyone's life. Brent it now a "real friend" with high school peers in his community.

Ginny Hanel lives with her husband and three of her children on the family popcorn farm in Mankato, Minnesota. Brent lives with two other children in a small home nearby. Ginny graduated from Augsburg College and taught fourth grade for five years and also did some tutoring. Since Brent's birth she has been involved in numerous activities having to do with improving the lives of people with mental retardation. Jennifer York is Associate Director at the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration and has worked with families and school districts throughout Minnesota to integrate children with severe disabilities in regular school life.

Outdoor Sportsman

Patrick Robert Byron

Here at John Marshall High School in Rochester, Minnesota, there is a class entitled "Sportsman's Biology," an environmental education class offered to all students. As a way to integrate the young men from my special education class into this class, we have participated in a number of outdoor activities and field trips with the general student population. We have participated in activities such as visiting a fish hatchery, fly-fishing, and bird-banding. Many of the young men in my class are avid outdoor sportsmen with their fathers and brothers. They are learning more about sports that they were already interested in through participation in this class.

I think that knowing the interests of students is important when integrating them. If there is an interest, there is usually a way to develop that interest here at John Marshall. I think that a second key to integration is communication. The staff members here at John Marshall are generally very open to new ideas about including students with special needs. Doug Ondler, the instructor of "Sportsman's Biology," is a case in point. He approached me about getting my students involved in his class. The more we talked, the better understanding he had of the young mens' interests. Parental interest and encouragement have also played an important role in getting the students involved in regular classes. Finally, my two energetic and willing educational assistants have been a major plus in integrating the students. The biggest obstacle we have faced has been the coordination of schedules. It has been difficult to "free up" staff to be at the right place at the right time and to juggle our other duties and responsibilities in order to participate with the students in regular classes.

The benefits of integration are many. The students with disabilities have appropriate models to learn from, they are gaining new skills, they have a chance to be involved in physical activities, and they have the opportunity to make friends with typical peers. The typical students have a chance to gain a better understanding of students with mental and physical handicaps. The feedback from regular education students and staff regarding integration has been very positive. Given the benefits to all concerned, I feel that integration is important and worthwhile.

Patrick Byron teaches senior high age students with moderate disabilities at John Marshall High School in Rochester, Minnesota.

"All My Friends are There"

Lorelei Wolfgang

Keshia is a little girl who has significant developmental delays and has just turned three years old. She is a member of the toddler room at a daycare center. Until very recently Keshia had demonstrated no verbal communication skills, did not interact with other children, and relied heavily on adults. She has recently developed a close friendship with another girl in her class. They look for each other to sit together at snack and meal times. They hold hands as they walk. They look forward to seeing each other and are sad if the other is absent. Keshia's friend is going to move up to the three year old classroom. The staff who work with Keshia and her parents want her to go to the three year old class as well because "all her friends are there." We are currently working to make this happen.

Keshia and her friend share a hug.

Lorelei Wolfgang is a speech and language pathologist currently working with a birth to two-year-old program for Independent School District #196 in Rosemount, Minnesota. Prior to her current position, Lorelei worked for seven years with Dakota, Incorporated, a nonprofit early intervention program.

Doing What Works

Elaine Bechtold

I have always felt that people with mental retardation should be treated like human beings first. When I attended grades 1-6 in 1931-1936, students with disabilities were integrated into my school and later became members of our community. When our daughter Jodi was born with Down syndrome in 1966, I was advised to institutionalize her. I could not do that. I enrolled her in a regular nursery school when she was three years old, and we had positive results for three years. Following those years she was placed in a segregated class for children with disabilities. We had no alternative. This was disastrous for Jodi and we had no outside parent support to push for integration in those days. At 11 years of age we decided to pull her out of public school and send her to a Christian day school where she would not be separated. This was a very happy experience for her and she told everyone, "I go to real school now." We also enrolled her in a program called the Institute for Reading Development. Through these experiences she learned a great deal, and especially the "privilege to learn to READ."

Aside from her involvement in school, we also involved Jodi in a number of activities in our community.

Jodi and her friends proudly display their winning state fair projects.

Jodi poses with the rest of the cast from the "grease" production.

Of great importance to her was 4-H club. There she was with typical children of all ages and participated in many different projects. She gave demonstrations at the local club level, county level, county fair, and state fair. I did ask the judges to gear their conference judging to a level appropriate to Jodi's understanding, as her comprehension didn't always fit their expectations for her age group. Once the judges understood, it worked! She also joined the 4-H Clowning project where she was "just another clown," and performed with her friends in 4-H Share the Fun skits, and the 4-H Arts-In Program, acting and singing on stage at county and state fairs. One of Jodi's favorite performances was the time she joined 4-H Club members from throughout the county to perform songs from "Grease" during the county fair. She went to 4-H Camp with typical kids and loved it! She was in the 4-H Speaking program and gave her speech at the American Legion, the Twin City Down Syndrome Association meeting, and the Befrienders Club.

Jodi was also involved in some community education classes, such as Old Time Dance Lessons and Aerobics. She participated in summer recreation with typical children and loved T-ball, softball, tumbling, swimming lessons, craft classes, and nature classes. Summer Bible school was also a positive experience where she got a chance to be with her peers.

Despite the fact that we were once told that Jodi needed to be separated and that she couldn't learn if she were educated alongside other children, Jodi did learn a great deal through her experiences with 4-H, Christian day school, and the Institute for Reading Development. I have learned a great deal as well. Children with disabilities must be treated like all children. They may learn more slowly, but with consistent and loving teachers it can be done. As with all children, the answer to helping Jodi learn has been to "do what works." For Jodi what has worked has been to include her with typical children in a variety of settings and allow her the opportunity to learn alongside them.

Elaine Bechtold was born into a farm family near Rockford, Minnesota. She is a wife, mother, grandmother, and teacher with a husband, four successful children, and eight grandchildren. Farming in rural Hennepin County is her life. After Jodi was born, she was determined to educate herself in every way possible regarding children with Down syndrome. This was accomplished by: (1) attending many workshops and seminars (2) studying and reading many books on Down syndrome, mental retardation, and child development; (3) being involved with the National Down Syndrome Congress Association, Twin City Down Syndrome Association; and (4) working with her local doctor, local community recreation program, and legislators. Much of her education came out of attending groups and classes sponsored by the Association for Retarded Citizens; PACER; St. Cloud State University; Institute for Reading Development at Mankato; 4-H Extension Services; Special Ministries of her church synod; Laubach Reading, Inc.; and St. Michael Foundation. She gained additional knowledge and experience by teaching Sunday School; becoming a 4-H leader; volunteering and holding an office on various boards regarding people with disabilities. Having a strong faith, good attitude, consistency, and doing "what works" is her philosophy and key in all facets of life. She believes God has a purpose in life for everyone, and that her daughter with Down syndrome became her college education. "The point of education is to teach children and adults to learn. You don't need a certificate to do that," she observes.